RYAN MATURA LIBRARY
3 4634 06934 5412

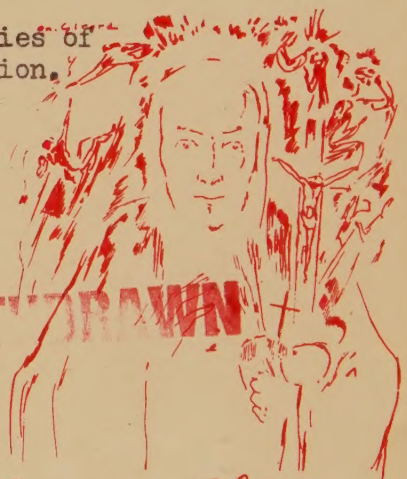
ROYALIST SPIES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

G. LENOTRE

923.20944
G679

Gosselin, Louis Leon Theodore

Two royalist spies of the French revolution.



8447

WITHDRAWN

Sacred Heart University Library

DC 145 .G75

Lenotre, G., 1855-1935.

Two royalist spies of the French revolution

DATE DUE

FEB 04 2002			

Demco, Inc. 38-293

TWO ROYALIST SPIES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

THE PRINCE DE LIGNE

A GAY MARSHAL OF THE OLD REGIME

By O. P. GILBERT

Translated from the French by JOSEPH McCABE

Illustrated. *Cloth, 12s. 6d. net.*

T. FISHER UNWIN LIMITED
LONDON W.C. 2

The lapel of the coat displays a V-shaped cut—at one time a sign by which Royalist agents recognized one another.

Frontispiece.

TWO ROYALIST SPIES
of the FRENCH REVOLUTION

BY G. LENOTRE

TRANSLATED BY BERNARD MIALL

T. FISHER UNWIN LTD
LONDON: ADELPHI TERRACE

First published in
English in 1924

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
(*All rights reserved*)

TO

MY OLD FRIEND

PIERRE BESSAND-MASSENET

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	FAUCHE-BOREL	11
II.	THE ROYALIST AGENCY	50
III.	STATE PRISON	84
IV.	PERLET	114
V.	CHARLES VITEL	141
VI.	PERLET IN LONDON	171
VII.	FAUCHE DEFLATED	202
VIII.	THE DAY OF ACCOUNTING	232

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FAUCHE-BOREL - - - -	*Frontispiece*	
VEYRAT - - - -	*facing page*	114
CHARLES VITEL - - -	,,	140
FAUCHE-BOREL - - -	,,	202

TWO ROYALIST SPIES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

CHAPTER I

FAUCHE-BOREL

When Louis Fauche married his cousin, Augustine Borel, on January 30, 1786, he was employed as a clerk in the business house of his father, Samuel Fauche, a printer and publisher of Neuchâtel, the charming town of the Swiss Jura that in those days was the capital of a principality placed under the suzerainty of the King of Prussia. Louis Fauche, a good-looking young fellow of twenty-four, robust and genial, already knew something of the world; and being of an enterprising nature, accustomed from his earliest youth to the business of a publishing-house, he had travelled extensively during the years 1780–1786, had worked for some time at Hamburg, in the publishing-house of Virchaux, and had paid several visits to Paris and to the principal French cities. In the intervals between his journeys abroad he was accustomed to return to Neuchâtel for the winter, where he fully appreciated the society of certain French authors, of whom some, if not celebrated, were at all events not unknown, such as Mercier, Mirabeau, and others, who were clients of his father's publishing-house, from which their works were issued.

Young Fauche, we might remark, was fond of rubbing shoulders with those who were described, then as now, as "being in the public eye." Anything like celebrity dazzled him; he was one of those who are fascinated and bewitched by a noble name or a pompous title. Moreover, he could not always resist the idle pleasure of boasting of his own capacities, and that even greater pleasure, of himself

believing the embellishments with which he adorned the narration of the most trivial episodes of his life. Someone who knew him well used to say of him: "He had the most profound belief in all that he told himself."* Slightly vulgar, extremely simple and ingenuous by nature, and of a restless and active temperament, he may well have regarded himself as superior to the mediocre destiny that appeared to be reserved for him; but apart from this, being always, "like a good Swiss," of a willing and obliging nature, he was ever ready to advise people, and, even though uninvited, to play a part in their lives. Thus, having met, at Lyons, a countryman of his, one Jérémie Vitel, who had settled in that city, he recommended him to come to Neuchâtel, introduced him to his father, and some years later contrived that he should marry his sister; thereby, without either intending or expecting it, involving the unfortunate man, together with his offspring, in a tragic and lamentable future. For it seemed as though all this unhappy man's ideas were fated to end in disaster, while the pitiless realities of life were powerless to cure him of his illusions.

After two years of marriage he set up in business on his own account as a bookseller, and in this connection he took over from his father, "in order to set up in trade," a stock of various publications, which, in a legal document dated May 27, 1778, was estimated as being of the value of 30,000 French livres. He set up in business in Neuchâtel itself, under the name of Fauche-Borel, in an old house belonging to his mother-in-law, and standing in the Rue de l'Hôpital.† This modest beginning assumed in his mind, infatuated with greatness, the proportion of a European event. His printing-press became, in his eyes, "a vast typographical establishment," which he declared to be "the finest in all Switzerland."‡ "Whole editions of the *Encyclopédie* and the *Description des Arts et Métiers*, by

* Charles Nodier, *Souvenirs de la Révolution*, i., 84.

† Now No. 5. The house is to-day the property of M. Albert Georges, a seller of umbrellas.

‡ *Mémoires de Fauche-Borel*, i., 36-37.

which the original publishers were unable to make any money, yielded me," he informs us, "very considerable profits."* It may be that he did not exaggerate the importance of his business; nevertheless, the following notice, inserted in the *Almanach de Neuchâtel*, seems to show that seven years later his publishing-house still retained the proportions of an ordinary country bookseller's and stationer's establishment: "Louis Fauche-Borel, publisher of this *Almanach*, having a printing-press with assorted founts of the very finest type, is in a position to undertake the printing and publishing of all works confided to his press. In addition to his own publications he has a complete assortment of text-books for the use of schools and colleges, both in town and country, as well as the classical works on history, literature, and geography; together with psalters, bound in shagreen or morocco, and other bindings, paper by the ream, of all sizes, for drawings and plans, coloured papers, cardboard, ink (black and red), exercise-books, pocket-books, parchment, vellum, ruled music-paper, sealing-wax, pencils, India-ink, visiting-cards, envelopes, quills. . . . He also supplies wrapping-paper, blotting-paper, etc., by the pound. . . ." Lastly, Fauche-Borel informs the public that he is still carrying on "the manufacture of vinegar, established by his mother-in-law, and is therefore prepared to buy wines suitable for vinegar-making."† As for his profits, they were, no doubt, less than he had estimated in his incorrigible optimism, for having, in 1790, undertaken to rebuild, with hewn stone, the front of his old house in the Rue de l'Hôpital, he was obliged to mortgage the property in order to raise the necessary money, while four years later he was obliged to raise yet another mortgage on the surplus value which his house had derived from this process of restoration. He was thus reduced, to

* *Idem.*

† *Almanach de Neuchâtel pour 1785.* I must not omit to express my profound gratitude to M. Louis Thevenas, the assistant keeper of the State archives at Neuchâtel, for valuable information concerning this period of Fauche-Borel's life, derived from documents discovered amongst the municipal records of Neuchâtel.

tell the truth, if not to actual want, at least to shifts and compromises, and the new house-front, richly carved, applied like a veneer to a "ruinous hovel," was a perfect symbol for that love of boasting and display with which its owner was afflicted.

For the rest, it is not surprising that money always slipped through the fingers of the young bookseller; for whether it was that he was careless in the matter of book-keeping, or whether he thought to grow rich by throwing dust in people's eyes, he apparently believed in having a good time, and lived the life of a wealthy merchant. Year after year, as soon as winter was over, he used to set out for a long journey, visiting Holland, Denmark, and Germany, and the summer he spent in Paris. He took pleasure in the life of inns and posting-houses; fond of good living, he did not disdain the abundance of the *table d'hôte*, at which his encyclopædic pomposity often found an appreciative audience. Having felt that he was not a prophet in his own country, he may have hoped to pass for such in the eyes of chance companions from whom he parted while they were still dazzled by his brilliance. Then, again, he had a way of telling the most amazing stories—and he told them, too, with such calm assurance—in which his own important person played the leading part! Did he not inform his listeners that he had been received at Versailles by the Queen of France, who welcomed him "with the greatest affability," thanking him warmly for his visit?* Did he not enjoy the most intimate relations with the famous Mirabeau, who confided all his secrets to him, and of whom he used to say that he was his political pupil and adversary?† In these boastful tales of his everything assumed an epic or dramatic character: thus, he used to praise the noble conduct of his brother-in-law, Jérémie Vitel, who, for refusing to reveal the name of Mercier, the anonymous author of *Le Tableau de Paris*, which was printed on his presses, was cast into the Bastille, where he refused to buy his liberty at the price of denunciation. Louis XVI.,

* *Mémoires*, i., 58. † *Ibid.*, i., 46.

touched by such noble behaviour, ordered the immediate release of this Spartan friend.*

Unwilling to lose an opportunity of acquiring patrons and protectors, and of adding to his personal importance, Fauche, during one of his visits to Paris, sought and obtained admission to the order of Freemasons. "At that time," he says, "it was both a necessity and an obligation; a man who could not claim that he was a Freemason was of no social importance whatever." He was admitted to the first three degrees of the lodge of the *Douce-Union*, thanks to the influential support of his fellow-publisher Guillot, who, five years later, was condemned to death and executed as a coiner.† On his return to Neuchâtel

* *Mémoires*, i., 24. As it is not without interest to verify Fauche-Borel's assertions whenever it is possible to do so, the reader may be interested to know that Jérémie Vitel was never a prisoner in the Bastille. His name is not included in Funck-Brentano's list. Nevertheless, the anecdote is not wholly the work of the imagination, as we shall see from the following reference: "Mallet, François, bookseller at Neuchâtel in Switzerland, entered the Bastille on the June, 30, 1783, the warrant being countersigned by Amelot, for selling prohibited books. We find in his examination before the magistrate, that the *Nouvelle Société typographique*, under the style of Fauche fils ainé, Favre et Cie, (was this Fauche the father or the brother of Fauche-Borel ?) paid M. le Comte de Mirabeau a hundred and fifty louis for the manuscript of his work, *Les Lettres de Cachet*, and a hundred louis for another work, entitled *Erotika-Biblion*. The same firm paid Mercier six thousand livres for the last four volumes of *Le Tableau de Paris*. Mallet left the Bastille on November 5, 1783, in pursuance of an order countersigned by Amelot." *Les Lettres de Cachet et les Prisonniers de la Bastille*, by Funck-Brentano, No. 5162. It was therefore Mallet and not Vitel who was imprisoned. It is interesting to surprise Fauche-Borel's peculiar talent for distortion in the very act, and likewise his curious faculty for ministering to his own vanity in respect of matters of which he knew absolutely nothing.

† Guillot had installed at Passy a secret press for printing assignats, in which he tried to interest Fauche-Borel (*Mémoires*, i., 94). Fauche refused to co-operate directly in this perilous business, but he obtained a position in Guillot's business for his elder brother, Samuel Fauche, who was involved in the prosecution, but acquitted. Guillot's execution (August 22, 1792) was attended by a peculiar accident, which cost the executioner his life. "Intending to hold up the head of one of the criminals in order to show it to the people, he fell from the scaffold and lay dead where he fell."—*Moniteur*, August 30, 1792.

Fauche founded there a masonic lodge, which did not prosper; the capital of the Swiss Jura was so near France that public attention, from the spring of 1789 onwards, was inevitably monopolized by the events occurring in Paris. By July the *émigrés* were already crossing the frontier in great numbers; some on foot, carrying bundles, and some on horseback, or in carriages, on which the coats of arms could no longer be distinguished, so thickly covered were they with dust or mud. The people of Neuchâtel stood at their windows or on their doorsteps to watch this heart-breaking procession of voluntary exiles; the inns of Neuchâtel were quickly filled; the new arrivals had to be lodged in private houses, and Fauche, for his part, obtained the honour of harbouring several priests. He preferred, however, those *émigrés* who bore illustrious names: de Rochechouart, de Champdivers, de Crillon, de Bombel, de Roquefort, de Montbarey; the last was of princely rank, and Fauche-Borel succeeded in obtaining him for a lodger. To less illustrious and more needy exiles he entrusted a parcel of his publications and his catalogues, which they proceeded to hawk about Germany, Switzerland, and Northern Italy. To those whose name was in itself a security, but who found themselves in difficulties, he lent money, "on their mere promise to pay"; though ill-natured people said "in return for heavy bills of exchange."* It was thus that he became a Royalist. He gave proof of his zeal by printing "the Declaration of Pilnitz," which was drawn up on August 26, 1791, between the two brothers of Louis XVI. and the foreign sovereigns; the first manifesto of the coalition, which was scattered broadcast throughout France.

However, he received no lack of warnings. A tragedy of which his brother-in-law, Jérémie Vitel, was the victim, should have taught him a lesson and put him on his guard

* "Fauche-Borel is in the habit of lending *émigrés* a little money in return for heavy bills of exchange" (*Bulletin de Police* for February 6, 1806: *La Police secrète du Premier Empire*, by Ernest d'Hauterive, ii., No. 775).

in matters of politics. Having suffered a reverse of fortune, he had decided to leave the country, and was awaiting, in Geneva, an opportunity of crossing to America. Unfortunately, having been won over to the monarchical cause by Fauche-Borel's example, he became an object of persecution to the Jacobins of Geneva, and being accused of having an understanding with the enemies of liberty, he was condemned to death and executed in July, 1794. The unfortunate man left no provision for his wife and children—Edouard, then fifteen years of age, and Charles, a year younger. Charles, hearing of his father's sentence, ran to the place of execution, hoping, perhaps, to soften the hearts of the executioners; but the sentence had already been carried out, and the child had to be dragged forcibly away from the blood-drenched spot where his father had just fallen. We shall meet with Charles and Edouard again in the course of the following chapters.

Another tragedy of which Fauche-Borel makes no mention in his copious *Mémoires* caused a great sensation amongst the citizens of Neuchâtel: his wife's mother committed suicide by throwing herself into the lake.* As a result of her death, Mme. Fauche-Borel inherited the house in the Rue de l'Hôpital, which, as we have seen, was already burdened by two mortgages. The publishing business, even with the addition of the manufacture of vinegar, established by the late Mme. Iker and carried on by Fauche himself, was not especially prosperous; there was no fortune to be made by printing propagandist pamphlets, such as *The Declaration of Pilnitz*, or tragedies on the death of Louis XVI., written by *émigré* poets. Nevertheless, the members of the Fauche-Borel household still enjoyed many of the elements of modest prosperity; and these would have been fully sufficient had the head of the family consented to modify his pretentious ambitions, to occupy himself with his business, and to give up regarding himself as the

* Fauche-Borel's mother-in-law married, firstly, Henri-Frédéric Borel, and secondly, being left a widow, a certain M. Iker. "She deliberately drowned herself in June, 1793, at the age of seventy" (*Archives of Neuchâtel*).

destined hero of great and wonderful adventures. Mme. Fauche was an excellent woman, very simple, highly charitable, and extremely industrious; she had borne her husband five children, two sons and three daughters, who might have kept the wandering bookseller at home; and during the years of terror, when he could no longer dream of his annual visit to Paris, he did sober down a little and devoted more of his time to his wine business. But this, so to speak, was no more than putting into port; at the first puff of wind that inflated his vanity he once again set sail.

In this quiet Swiss home, which seemed a centre of middle-class peace and quiet, there appeared, early in the spring of 1795, at nine o'clock one evening, just as Fauche-Borel was supping in the bosom of his family, a stranger—a man of medium height, with pale cheeks, and eyes that sparkled beneath heavy and almost jet-black eyebrows. His nose was long and his chin like the toe of a boot; further, the stranger appeared to be hunchbacked, or at least more than a little round-shouldered; and his appearance was that of "a Portuguese Jew."* He gave his name as "Comte Maurice de Montgaillard," and settled himself upon them without more ado, promptly dazzling and captivating his simple-minded hosts. And he proved to be the very devil himself.

All those writers who have had occasion to mention Montgaillard's name have unanimously honoured him by adjectives commonly reserved for Satan, the infernal Tempter; and if ever the muse of History were to own herself at a loss, it would be in the presence of this terrible Protean spy, who appears, disappears, and appears again, now coaxing and seductive, now cynical and merciless, selling those who buy him and surviving forty years of revolution, having always retained the favour, not only

* Fauche-Borel, *Mémoires*, i., 206. Fauche speaks of "a deformed shoulder"; but the description of Montgaillard in the jailer's book at the Temple does not mention this deformity, whereas the description of his brother, Guillaume Honoré, describes the latter as "hunch-backed on the right side" (Archives of the Prefecture of Police: *Registres du Temple*, iii., fo. 175, 16 Nivôse, year IV.).

of every Government, but also of its most persistent enemies; trafficking in his sworn word, brilliantly witty, skilful in persuasion, specious, brutal, insinuating, authoritative, obsequious, arrogant, and blessed with a faculty of undaunted assurance calculated to disarm and baffle honest folks. His name was Roques, and he came of a noble but impoverished family of Languedoc. A pupil at the Royal Military College of Sorrèze, a cadet, and then a gentleman-at-arms, in the regiment of Auxerrois, an officer without valour who resigned his commission after two campaigns in Martinique, he settled down in Paris and somehow forced his way into the little court surrounding Mgr. Champion de Cicé, Archbishop of Bordeaux, who spent much of his time far removed from his flock, at the Abbey of St. Germain-des-Prés. Montgaillard, after some dealings with Necker, pushed himself forward in his insinuating manner, and married one of his Eminence's god-daughters, who had just left the convent with a pretty fortune of her own, and was overwhelmed with magnificent presents by his Eminence's *entourage*. Two sons were born of this marriage, but domestic felicity did not content Montgaillard for long. Admitted to the most aristocratic circles of Parisian society, he was a frequent guest in Ministerial as well as in intellectual circles. On the outbreak of the Revolution he devoted himself to stock-jobbing, and, being enrolled among the secret agents of the Court, he took part in the preparations for the flight of the King, to whom—that is, if we may take the man's word—he lent a large sum of money, while the rest of his fortune—again, if we may take his word for it—was sacrificed in the interests of the Queen, then a prisoner in the Temple. He visited England, crossed the water to Belgium, and returned to France; in short, he went whither he would, although inscribed upon the list of *émigrés*, from which his name was very soon erased: a most unusual favour. Whom was he serving—the Princes or the Revolution? Who was his protector? He stayed in Paris during the Terror, showing himself everywhere, even beside the scaffold when the day's

" batch " was worth the trouble. In the spring of 1794 he was charged with a mission to the Austrian camp, making his way to the headquarters of the Duke of York; he also contrived to be presented to the Emperor Francis II. Did he remain there, as has been said, merely as Robespierre's* mouthpiece, or was he endeavouring to engage in some lucrative enterprise on his own account and to his own advantage? He " mysteriously " made his way through the outposts of the two armies, dragging along with him the former priest of his native village, the Abbé Du Montet, whom he introduced as the tutor—*in partibus*—of his children. Then we once more find him in England, whither he was sent by the Duke of York; there he was welcomed as a phenomenal person, a survivor of the Terror, and the sole well-informed eye-witness of those Parisian tragedies which had already become legendary. In this quality Montgaillard became an object of curiosity; he was spoken of in the London clubs, while the newspapers reproduced his narratives; he was received by Pitt, sent for by the Duke of Gloucester, and was a frequent guest of the Ministers and the Princes of the reigning house; he published a pamphlet attacking the French Republic,† in which it was manifest that he was perfectly informed in respect of current events and the secret political motives of the day. He then returned to the Continent, and on his way to Switzerland he met, on the banks of the Rhine, an old acquaintance, a fellow-pupil of the military college of Sorrèze, who introduced him to the Prince de Condé. And there we leave him awhile, changing the position of his batteries and evolving fresh tactical methods.

Prince Louis-Joseph de Condé, who was in command of the little army of *émigrés* strung out along the right bank of the Rhine, had at this time—January, 1795—his head-

* Barthélemy regarded the matter as certain. (*Papiers de Barthélemy*, among the records of the Foreign Office, quoted by Clément de Lacroix.) Forneron also mentions the presence at the Austrian headquarters in May, 1794, of an " officer " sent thither by Robespierre (*Histoire des Émigrés*, i., 350).

† *État de la France au Mois de Mai*, 1794.

quarters in the pleasant country house of the Bishops of Spire at Bruchsal, a village in Baden, near Karlsruhe. Condé was nearing his sixtieth year; a brave man and a skilful commander, his well-known merit as a soldier was combined with the "finest tact and the strictest courtesy."* Nevertheless, although he was not lacking in foresight, he was deficient in energy; as fussy and timorous in politics as he was resolute on the field of battle, "he conceived important projects, but shrank from carrying them out."† His army at this time was no more than four to five thousand strong, consisting wholly of French volunteers. It was a strange spectacle, this collection of ex-officers, magistrates, and even bourgeois, carrying the knapsack of the infantryman or wielding the curry-comb of the cavalryman in a spirit of perfect equality. An equality of wretchedness—for Condé's army was in the pay of Austria: one loaf of "munition" bread and sixpence a day for the men; for the officers, nothing at all, despite which they were numerous. At the mess of the headquarters staff they ate the ordinary soldiers' bread as cooked in camp. The general dearth was so great that the Princess of Monaco, Condé's mistress, had to sell her diamonds and her plate in order to supply the need of the little Court. To tell the truth, the royal army was dying of starvation, to the lasting astonishment of the Germans, who could not understand why these crazy French gentlemen, the owners of country houses, castles, large incomes, and lucrative offices, should resign themselves so cheerfully, for the sake of a futile point of honour, to marching, musket on shoulder, with empty bellies, against the bitter north wind. . . . "You have plenty of money," they used to say, "and you ought not to give it up."‡ Such was the judgment of these pedestrian souls, who were quite incapable of understanding this intestine warfare between Royalists and Republicans. Long after, at Oberkamlach, one of the battlefields of this fratricidal

* Forneron, i., 235.

† *Souvenirs du Comte de Montgaillard*, 308.

‡ *Souvenirs d'un Officier royaliste*, quoted by Forneron, i., 238.

conflict, there was still to be seen a cenotaph bearing this inscription: "*Here several thousand Frenchmen cut one another's throats without our understanding precisely why.*"*

Opposing this army of nobles, the two armies of the Rhine and the Moselle, soon to be united, by an order of the Committee of Safety, under the command of Pichegru, the famous conqueror of Holland,† were encamped on the left bank from Huningue to the gates of Mayence. Here, too, the soldiers were "faint with starvation"; they had neither bread nor clothing nor food; they wandered about camp in rags, having neither stockings nor overcoats; they lived in mud hovels, and were able to purchase nothing with the assignats with which they were paid. Even the beggars would not accept this form of payment. Our wretched soldiers tore up the roots of the vines wherewith to make soup, or gathered clover, which they placed in the pot as a substitute for vegetables. The officers and leaders of the army, even those whose pockets were stuffed with paper money, were no better off: they were forced to sell their horses and carriages to obtain a little hard cash. When an officer had a few pounds in his pocket he would go to Basle to spend it, and the officers of the Republican army used to meet Condé's officers at the *tables d'hôte* of this neutral city, "exchanging every imaginable compliment and courtesy." Even the rank-and-file of the Republican army, once they had crossed the Rhine, used to make advances to the *émigrés*, and to pay them compliments, and in order to stimulate their brotherly feeling, the patriot band used to play, after the firing of the sunset guns, such royalist airs as *O Richard, O mon Roi*, or such topical songs as *N'allez plus au Forêt Noire*, in order to send a friendly good-night to these fellow-countrymen, whose melancholy was but increased by these distant melodies that came from their beloved France.‡

* Puymaigre, *Souvenirs*, 31.

† The decree is dated 13 Ventôse, year III. = March 3, 1795.

‡ Caudrillier, *La Trahison de Pichegru*, 34.

Montgaillard, in whom the perspicacity of the great adventurer was always on the alert, was quick to realise the peculiarities of the situation and the manner in which it favoured the exercise of his malevolent genius. He did not linger long at Bruchsal, but offered the Prince de Condé his services in connection with the negotiation of a loan, and, as he could not stop in Basle (since *émigrés* were not allowed to remain in that city for longer than twenty-four hours), he settled down at a distance of some ten or twelve miles, at Rheinfelden, a small watering-place, forming part of the estates of the Margrave of Baden.* Putting up at the sign of the *Angel*, he there wrote a new essay, *L'An*, 1795, and with this pretext in his pocket he set off for Neuchâtel, in order to present himself, as we have seen, at the house of Fauche-Borel, for whom he reserved the honour of publishing his manuscript.

It will surprise no one to hear that the ingenuous printer was flattered by the proposal. He had heard the celebrated Comte de Montgaillard spoken of as a gentleman of ancient race and undoubted loyalty who was also a successful pamphleteer. As a matter of fact, he had formed a totally different conception of the man; he had expected to see a tall, robust, exuberant person, with a touch of the swaggering bully to match the romantic emphasis of his name.† The aspect of this mean-looking person, with his gimlet eyes and his incisive, authoritative tone, disappointed him slightly; but the visitor turned out to be such a fervent royalist, was so witty, spoke of politics and diplomacy in such an experienced fashion, and displayed such a familiarity with good society, that Fauche was captivated, feeling that his own importance was increased when the famous Comte de Montgaillard, the friend of Louis XVI. and his Queen, the constant companion and confidant of the famous statesmen of France, Germany, and England, accepted without a trace of pride the humble hospitality

* Rheinfelden was reunited to Switzerland in the year 1801.

† "I had expected to see a tall man of imposing appearance" (*Mémoires de Fauche-Borel*, i., 206).

offered him by the bookseller, making his home with the latter while he completed his book.

Fauche-Borel was intoxicated by so much condescension. At last he had achieved permanent relations with a great personality, familiar with all the Courts of Europe, with whom he could exchange reflections concerning passing events, and who appreciated the worthy bookseller's humble and disinterested devotion to the royal cause. Of this Montgaillard made no secret, even to the prejudice of his worthy host's modesty; for example, he would leave his letters about, or would even read passages from the reports which he used to send the Comte d'Antraigues, whose offices at Venice were the clearing-house for the correspondence of the royalist agents, secret or confessed, scattered throughout France and the rest of Europe. In these reports of Montgaillard's the publisher met with passages such as the following: "I explicitly admit the obligations which I owe to M. Fauche, for his manner of thinking would do honour to a Ministerial mind . . . the services which he has rendered to the good cause deserve the gratitude of the Government, for the community is greatly in M. Fauche's debt. . . ." And the following lines must have been even more intoxicating: "I did not hesitate to make his conduct known in Condé's army, and if I had the opportunity of informing M. le Regent of them I should hasten to call his attention to the services—if I may so call them, the *sublime* services—which M. Fauche is rendering the French monarchy. . . ."*

To the joy of finding himself so highly valued, of realising that the great ones of the earth were informed of his name and his merits, was added the satisfaction of being treated as an intimate by a gentleman bearing a great name, and of being able to embellish all his remarks with the words *M. le Comte* or *Mon cher Comte*, and to exhibit such a personage to the wondering inhabitants of Neuchâtel. In short, Fauche-Borel was already spellbound, and was henceforth powerless to escape from the maleficent domination of the trickster.

* Fauche-Borel, *Mémoires*, i., 214.

The latter, assured of maintaining his influence over poor Fauche, for his shrewdness had quickly penetrated the bookseller's vanity and ambition, was now watching at Rheinfelden, whither he had returned, for an opportunity of a "magnificent coup." He learned that England, "in order to help all good Frenchmen to re-establish order and public tranquillity in their native country," had determined to subsidize the army of the Prince de Condé, who, as early as the end of March, "was gratefully accepting the benefits of his Britannic Majesty."* Immediately the gold of Pactolus flowed into Mulheim, a market-town of Baden, whither Condé had removed his headquarters; and in less than four months, in addition to the pay and the revictualling of his troops, the poor Prince, who, a little while before, was forced to refuse the sum of 500 livres to his daughter, received more than half a million, and with amazement, but not without some anxiety, saw a credit account of three millions and a half opened in his name† for "secret services."

There is a striking correlation between the first few showers of this golden rainfall and Montgaillard's appearance on the scene. On the very day when Condé installed himself at Mulheim, Montgaillard also arrived, and with his boastful yet insinuating manner, and his skill in convincing his hearers of the truth of his statements, he soon got the better of the weak and vacillating Prince and won him over to his infernal plot. He had conceived the idea of "buying Pichegru," and he undertook to bring over to the royal cause the most illustrious of the Republic's generals. One had only to offer him "the staff of a Marshal of France, the *cordon rouge*‡ and the *grand-croix* of the Order of St. Louis, the Château de Chambord for life, four pieces of artillery taken from the Austrians, one or two millions in hard cash, and a pension of a hundred and twenty thousand livres," and in return the Republican troops would sport the White

* Caudrillier, *La Trahison de Pichegru*, 29.
† *Idem*, 30.
‡ The knighthood of the Order of St. Louis.

Cockade, the lilies of France would float over all the belfries of Alsace, and the fortress of Huningue would open its gates to Condé's army. The Prince hesitated; he was afraid to commit himself without the formal assent of the Pretender and Monsieur, the brother of Louis XVI., who lived in Verona and was known as the Regent. In order to hasten matters Montgaillard urged Condé to complete the bargain, alleging that he had no time to lose, as important interests called for his presence in Italy. Condé, always timorous and fidgety, begged him to mark time, and to return to Rheinfelden, there to await his decision. Montgaillard obeyed. Before a week had elapsed he was recalled to Mulheim: the Prince consented to risk the adventure, and was anxious as quickly as possible to decide upon the means of carrying it out. Montgaillard responded to this pressing invitation by a long memorandum and took, not the road to Mulheim, but that leading to Neuchâtel.

He had, as a matter of fact, reflected that if "the purchase" of General Pichegru with the aid of England's millions offered the middleman an infallible opportunity of acquiring wealth and notoriety, it was also bound to involve a certain amount of danger. The man audacious enough to enter France, approach the conqueror of Holland and propose that he should betray his country, ran a considerable risk of never returning from so hazardous an expedition. Pichegru, in truth, was neither a frantic Jacobin nor a lover of bloodshed; he made no secret of his disapproval of the negligence displayed by the committees of the Convention, to which he attributed the miserable condition of his troops. But there might well have been at his headquarters representatives of the people who certainly would not have approved of such a proposal, and there was a great probability that the secret agent of the Prince de Condé, wriggling into this revolutionary environment with the intention of corrupting the Commander-in-Chief, would be treated as a common spy and shot without the formality of a trial. Montgaillard accordingly decided to make a division of the fruits of his activity: he would

keep the advantages for himself and reserve the dangers for his friend Fauche-Borel.

At the publisher's house he was received "with the greatest cordiality." Politics were discussed; and once again Montgaillard praised to the skies the services which Fauche had rendered to the good cause—a subject which never failed of its effect; he then eagerly urged him to undertake a short journey to Mulheim and to pay his respects to the Prince de Condé, "who had something private to say to him."* Fauche, caught in the snare, supposed that his printing-office was in question, and congratulated himself all the more in that England would be his paymaster, while he placed all his presses at the disposal of the French monarchy —and a generous paymaster, for the British commissioners appeared to know only one cause of anxiety, "which was, that they might not spend enough money." He set out immediately, as delighted with the prospect of being received by a Royal Highness as with that of the lucrative affair which he saw before him. Thirty-seven leagues divided Neuchâtel from Mulheim by way of Soleure and Basle, a distance which was no deterrent to the nomadic publisher; he was to undertake many another journey, and this was but the first step of a vagrancy which for twenty years was to know no cessation.

Although the honour of being received by the Prince de Condé had for him all the glamour of a dream, he suffered a certain disappointment when confronted by his Highness. His imagination had been running away with him. He had expected to see a conquering hero: he found a timid gentleman, who accorded him an amiable welcome, and, with an embarrassed air, addressed him as an old acquaintance: "My dear Monsieur Fauche. . . ." He then thanked him for his good offices and his devotion; Montgaillard had spoken no less than the truth, and he had warmly praised the merits of his friend the printer. "Now," continued the Prince, after blundering through certain preparatory considerations, "I am determined to sound the Generals

* Fauche-Borel, *Mémoires*, i., 224.

of the Convention, and I have decided that you are the man to carry the King's offer to General Pichegru, in order to persuade him to serve the cause of the monarchy by compelling him to realise that the Republic is merely a dream."

Fauche, flabbergasted, could hardly trust his ears. When the Prince was silent he attempted to express his amazement and to withdraw himself as gracefully as he could from this dubious venture, protesting that he did not feel that he was the proper person to undertake such a mission; "moreover, he was the father of a family, the head of a business-house which demanded all his time and energy; he was not ambitious, and had no other desire than to enjoy the fruit of his labours amidst his friends and relations. . . ."

But Condé was not listening to him; approaching him, he replied: "Monsieur Fauche, I shall select no other." He had learnt his lesson, and learnt it well: he placed his hand upon the bookseller's breast, above his heart, saying: "You have a heart in your breast, you will succeed." As for the reward offered, it was enough to arouse his zeal: as soon as the Restoration was an accomplished fact he was to receive "a million, the directorship of the Royal Press, the position of Inspector-General of the Libraries of France, and the Order of St. Michael." In the event of failure, a thousand louis would repay Fauche for his trouble.*

How should he withstand so great a Prince—the bearer of a name so illustrious—who spoke to one in so moving a manner and proposed to reward one royally for a journey of a few leagues? To be sure, the journey was not without its dangers: but—a million!—"If you see a citizen of Geneva throw himself from the window of a fifth storey," the Duc de Choiseul once declared, "you can follow him with perfect safety: there's fifty per cent. to be made out of it." Fauche took the leap: he protested no longer, but in suitable terms assured his Highness of his devotion, and immediately became for his Highness "my dear Fauche." He left the presence beaming with pride, convinced that he

* Montgaillard, *Mémoire concernant la Trahison de Pichegru.*

was henceforth to walk among the great figures of history. He had obtained ten days' respite in order to prepare himself for this glorious part, and only in the coach that carried him back to Neuchâtel did the shadows of disenchantment dim the future. On returning home he had to inform his wife of the extraordinary mission which he was about to take. " You are a lost man !" she cried, dissolving in tears. He himself did not sleep that night. At the break of day Mlle. Fauche recommenced her lamentations, but her tears soon ceased; heroically she resigned herself; no doubt her husband had made her realise that the reward of his sacrifice would end their money troubles and assure their future prosperity. And then Montgaillard was there, reviving their courage and attending to the necessary passports; racking his brains to find motives which would justify the dreaded journey. Fauche, he decided, had best take the road in the quality of broker, his reason for entering France being his desire to buy Government stock. Under the pretext of not allowing the bookseller to launch himself alone upon this perilous adventure, but in actual fact in order to have him watched, Montgaillard selected a second citizen of Neuchâtel, who had formerly been a secret agent of the King of Prussia: a certain Antoine Courant, whom he knew through and through, and whom he believed to be endowed " with an imperturbable coolness in danger and an exceptional intrepidity." Having seen the two men well stuffed with false documents and lying reports, he advised the Prince de Condé of their approaching visit, saw them into their coach, recommended them to their Maker, and set out for Basle, where he proposed " quietly to wait for their news."*

It was then about midsummer, 1795. When Fauche and his attendant reached Mulheim the Prince de Condé once more hesitated. He was again afraid to move without the

* *Souvenirs du Comte de Montgaillard*, published by Clément de Lacroix, p. 10. As has been seen, the French *émigrés* were not allowed to remain in Basle longer than twenty-four hours. Montgaillard was probably living in the Baden suburb on the right bank of the Rhine.

express authorisation of the Regent, who, being then domiciled in Verona, had some days previously proclaimed himself King of France and Navarre, under the style of Louis XVIII., by right of succession to the little prisoner of the Temple, whose death had been recently announced. Nevertheless, Condé consented to allow Fauche to make a first personal proposal to Pichegru; and he gave instructions that 7,200 francs should be remitted to the bookseller for his expenses. On July 26 Fauche and Courant, returning to Basle, found there Montgaillard, who, from that city, was safely able to direct "*the principal management of the negotiations*," and to whom the two emissaries were required to address their correspondence. Then, on the morning of the 29th, they began their journey, intending, at all events, to reach Strasburg.

Some hundred yards beyond the gates of Basle is the French frontier. A Customs post is found there, and there are soldiers. The post-chaise bearing Fauche and Courant was forced to pull up; their passports, marked "Swiss citizens," were examined; but there was no trouble about them. The carriage continued on its way along the high-roads of Alsace, leaving behind it on the right the road to Huningue, the first French fortress, whose bastions were visible through the trees. That night the travellers entered Strasburg, by the gate named after the Dauphine.* On the following day Fauche rode out into the country; he learned that Pichegru was staying at Illkirck, a village between three and four miles to the south of Strasburg; and thither he repaired. He found it a fairly simple matter to obtain access to the General, whom the Alsatians had welcomed with enthusiasm; but the three representatives of the people, Rivaut, Rewbel, and Merlin de Thionville, scarcely left his side, and it was impossible to think of approaching him in their presence. The commissaries of

* From Basle to Strasburg was fifteen posts or thirteen leagues. At the rate of eight or ten kilomètres per hour (five to six miles), which was the ordinary pace of posting-carriages, the journey was one of twelve to fifteen hours.

the Convention were invested with unlimited powers; they had the right of life and death over their fellow-citizens, and a stranger found in an entrenched camp in war-time was doomed, without hope of mercy, to the firing-squad. On August 11 there was a rumour that the General was leaving for Huningue; whereupon Fauche at once ran to the posting-house, ordered horses, jumped into his chaise, and in a trice was bowling along the Alsatian highway which he had traversed in the opposite direction only a few days previously. His purpose was not to enter Huningue, in those days a celebrated fortress, but to stop at Saint-Louis, then known as *Bourg-libre*, situated at the bifurcation of the highways leading from Strasburg and Paris to Basle. However, while his carriage was waiting at Gross-Kembs, the last stage of his journey, and the horses were being changed, the postmaster, deceived by the traveller's appearance, and taking him to be a commissary with the army, asked him if he would be so good as to allow him to place in the strong-box of his chaise a basket of food expected by the inn-keeper at Huningue, where the General was to dine with his staff and the commissaries of the Convention. Fauche hastened to accede to this proposal: it offered him an unexpected means of reaching the fortress and of entering the inn where Pichegru had his quarters. Two hours later he entered the fortress and his carriage drew up before the Hôtel du Corbeau, the best-known hostelry in the town, which was kept by Citizen Schultz* and his wife.

* *Geschichte des stadt und ehemaligen Festung Huningen*, Karl Tschamberg, Saint-Louis, 1894. Here the narrative followed is that of Fauche-Borel, i., 232, etc., which is identical with that of *Lombard de Langres Mémoires*, 120, etc. The *Mémoires de Lombard de Langres* were published in 1823; those of Fauche-Borel in 1829. It appears from this proximity of date that Lombard, being acquainted with the bookseller, had obtained from him the story of his negotiations, and had carefully noted it down. It differs only slightly from that of d'Antraigues, which was based on an account either written or dictated by Montgaillard. This is not to say that it is infallible. What passed at his first interval with Pichegru could only be learned from Fauche himself, and the bookseller was vain enough to keep silence in respect of that which was not to his

The Hôtel du Corbeau was one of those Alsatian houses in which nothing is sacrificed to appearances, but which seem to represent the idea of comfort as it was understood in the eighteenth century. A vast brightly-lit kitchen and a dining-room on the ground-floor; a long narrow corridor leading to a staircase which one climbed to reach the *salon*, or, in the phraseology of the time, the *place d'honneur*, which was found on the *bel étage*. Fauche-Borel, alighting from his carriage, was welcomed by the inn-keeper, who, while unpacking the provisions sent from Gross-Kembs, likewise took it for granted that the newcomer was attached to the staff, and invited him to ascend to the first floor, where the gentlemen, with their fellow-officers, were about to be served with their dinner. Fauche, no doubt with a certain flutter of the heart, ascended the staircase and found himself face to face with Pichegru, who, while waiting for dinner to be served, was walking up and down conversing with one of his officers. The bookseller stood "where he was bound to be remarked," and each time the General, in his march to and fro, was facing in his direction, he gazed at him insistently and "in a significant manner." It may be that Pichegru recognised the stranger, having already encountered him during the preceding days at Illkirck; or it may be that he realised that this intruder had something to say to him; or it may even be—and this is most probable—that he divined in Fauche a man with a request to make, or merely a person of whose discretion he was doubtful; for he said, suddenly, raising his voice: "I am not going to dine here; I shall go to Blotzheim, to Madame Salomon." And he immediately left the room, and went downstairs and out of the inn. Fauche followed him; it was raining "in torrents"; he offered his cloak to the aide-de-camp, to cover the General's shoulders. "No," said the officer, "the

---

own advantage. But it seems probable that his narrative, however far it may have been embellished, contains a certain amount of truth, since, as regards the basic facts, it has survived the minute and learned criticism to which it was subjected by M. Caudrillier in his work of *La Trahison de Pichegru*.

General is not afraid of the rain"; and he added, as he strode off, without addressing Fauche in particular: "He is going to Blotzheim to dine at Madame Salomon's. Blotzheim is a couple of miles from the road, a place where you can get baths." Fauche-Borel took this "aside" as an invitation. He returned to the inn, took his place at the *table d'hôte* and determined to go to Blotzheim when he had finished his dinner. But as he was engaged in eating his dinner, he noticed that one of his fellow-guests was gazing at him with attention; and it seemed to him that he recognised this importunate person, for he had already asked him some insidious questions, as a man whom he had met several times at Basle in the Hôtel des Trois Rois. A spy, no doubt! Escape became a matter of urgency. Without waiting to finish his meal, Fauche left the table, stating that he was about to return, called his postillion, gave him orders to harness his horses, paid his bill, got into his chaise, and gave the order "to drive along the Strasburg road!" But hardly had his carriage passed the gates of Huningue than he thrust his head out of the window and called to the postillion: "To Blotzheim!" The horses were pulled up; the postillion disputed the order; he was strictly forbidden to leave the national highway. A crown, of six francs' value, an all-powerful talisman in those days of assignats, soon overcame his scruples, and the post-chaise, jolting hideously, turned off into a country lane, and, by driving across country, finally reached the village.* Fauche made enquiries as to the baths, asked to see the proprietress, introduced himself as greatly interested in baths and bathing, inspected the establishment, felt in his pocket for

* Blotzheim is, as a matter of fact, surrounded by cultivated land, and lies some two miles to the left of the road from Huningue to Strasburg. As regards this point of topography Fauche-Borel's remarks are perfectly correct. It is astonishing that Lombard de Langres and Montgaillard should have confused Blotzheim with Altkirch, which lies at a distance of sixteen miles to the north, and which Fauche never visited. Possibly relying upon their memories of the bookseller's narrative they confused Altkirch with Illkirch, a small market-town in the neighbourhood of Strasburg, where Fauche first saw Pichegru.

a pencil, took notes of what he saw, encouraged the woman to converse, and learned from her that General Pichegru had just arrived and was calling on Mme. Salomon at the château just outside the village. "What? Pichegru's here? I am particularly anxious to see him!"—"My little boy will take you there!"

He came to a handsome avenue and an iron gate that stood ajar. Fauche boldly entered, demanding speech with the General, "about a consignment of champagne which had been ordered by the staff."* Suddenly Pichegru appeared: "Do you want to speak to me?" The bookseller, visibly affected, explained that, having in his possession some precious manuscripts of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, he was preparing an edition of that philosopher's works. This edition he was hoping to place under the exalted patronage of the General; he had indeed drafted a brief dedication, which he produced from his pocket. Pichegru took the paper and ran his eyes over it, and a few remarks were exchanged on the subject. Fauche was already dismissed; so that this was the critical moment. Summoning up all his courage he added, below his breath: "I wanted to speak to you further on more important matters. . . ." His whole life was staked upon this moment of anguish; if he spoke it might be that a thunderbolt would strike him to the earth; it might be that a moment later he would be seized and bound and sent to his death. . . . Nevertheless, he continued, in faltering tones: "I have ventured to undertake a mission of very great importance. . . ." "On whose

* Here Fauche-Borel's memory would seem to be at fault. He states that on entering the courtyard of the Château he saw Pichegru at one of the windows clad in a dressing-gown, and that on catching sight of his visitor he changed into uniform. A few lines further on he says: "Pichegru was informed of my presence; he came from the *salon* where he was drinking coffee with some ladies." It is difficult to see how the *salon* and the dressing-gown can be reconciled with the coffee and the ladies. (Surely not so difficult! What if Pichegru, having enjoyed a meal and a "wash and brush up," went to the *salon* in order to apologise for his absence from the postprandial ceremony, owing to the importunity of a caller?—*Translator.*)

behalf ?"—"On behalf of Monsieur le Prince de Condé." "And what does he want me to do ?"—"General . . . the Prince would like to discuss measures with you with a view to uniting his army to yours, and to require it to take the oath of fealty to the King. . . ." Pichegru appeared to be surprised: "So that's all, is it ?" So the thunderbolt had not fallen; but the General's voice assumed an austere and remote intonation: "When did you leave the Prince ?"—"On the 28th of July." "Where did you leave him ?"—"At Mulheim." "And what have you been doing since then ?"—"I never left Strasburg and the surrounding parts, as I was trying to find an opportunity to speak to you." "True, I saw you there; but how did you manage to get into Huningue ?"—"By using my wits, in the capacity of a person attached to your staff." "Have you a passport ? Let's see it." Fauche produced his passport for the General's inspection. Pichegru examined it and returned it, remarking: "Yes, it's in order, and it may still be of use !"; and then, suddenly: "Haven't you any letter from the Prince for me ?"—"He was afraid of compromising you, and me, too, for that matter."—"Nevertheless, one has to know to whom one is speaking. I know his handwriting. Let him tell me definitely what he wants of me. If he takes me to be a good Frenchman he is right. Be here the day after to-morrow at five o'clock in the morning. You'll have plenty of time for that !"*

Pichegru returned to the *salon*. Fauche left the château beaming with joy, hardly realising as yet that his neck was safe. He jumped into his post-chaise, and an hour later entered Basle just as the gates of that city were about to close. He hastened to call upon Montgaillard, and to him described the brilliant success of his perilous mission, without a trace of undue modesty. It is a pity that we cannot verify the details of his narrative, for this mission was the first chapter in the "political" life of this amazing puppet, who, from that day, believed himself to be the shrewdest

* Fauche-Borel, *Mémoires*, i., 240, and Lombard de Langres, i., 213.

of diplomatists and the most irresistible of negotiators. For the time being Pichegru was always in his thoughts; we shall see him for ever on the move between the Court of the exiled Prince and the general headquarters of the Republican army; and during the course of this protracted conspiracy, which was to end only in catastrophe, he never ceased to prophesy victory, always proclaiming that the morrow would see the happy issue of his activities, constantly calling attention to his devotion and ability, convinced that he was rising in the world by the fact that he was only degrading himself. However great the blindness of his satisfied vanity, however sincere he may have believed his Royalist convictions to be, he must at times have been conscious of the odious part which he was playing. To corrupt is to poison, and this was really the task to which he was henceforth to devote his energies and his life.

On the appointed day Fauche, returning from the royal camp, waited upon Pichegru at Illkirck. Sewn into the sleeve of his coat under his armpit, he bore the letter from the Prince de Condé. He was shown into the General's study, where four or five officers of high rank were present, and Fauche was overcome with terror: for what if this were a court-martial? But no; Pichegru dismissed his lieutenants, asked for the letter, read it at a glance, and returned it to Fauche.* He was ready to open negotiations: the conspiracy had become a practical policy, the Restoration

* Fauche tells us that Pichegru used the letter to light his pipe; but Caudrillier, together with Montgaillard, declares that the Prince's letter was returned to Fauche; it is in the archives of Chantilly; it is worded as follows: "Since M. Pichegru seems to think, as I have always hoped he would think, it is absolutely necessary that he should send me, together with a note in his own handwriting, a confidential agent who will tell me positively whether he wishes to do and can do what he has been asked to do; an agent to whom I, for my part, can explain the advantages of every kind of whose enjoyment I can assure Monsieur Pichegru and his friends, if he is willing to assist me to save France and restore our sovereign to his throne; failing the measure which I have suggested, all sorts and ways and means might be devised, and yet precious time might be lost and an important secret compromised.—Louis Joseph de Bourbon." Neither addressed nor sealed.

was imminent, and Fauche was on the point of becoming a millionaire.

On the occasion of his third journey into Alsace he arrived there stuffed with money—a hundred and twelve thousand livres, which he had received from Wickham, the English *chargé d'affaires* in Switzerland.* It needs an effort of the imagination to realise what such a treasure might mean in France, where the assignat for 100 francs was worth but sixpence, and whence gold and silver coin, and even copper, had long disappeared. Doubtless Fauche left some of this wealth at Neuchâtel, where he broke his journey;† but he was still a Crœsus when he reached the Republican camp. He overwhelmed with presents and little gifts of money the unfortunate French officers who were drawing only 8 livres monthly in cash; he gave them watches, stockings, body-linen. Adjutant-General Badouville, the aide-de-camp and confidant of Pichegru—otherwise known as *Coco* or *Cupidon*—dogged the steps of the wealthy Swiss, would not be parted from him, would not allow him to begin the remainder of his journey before he "had placed the remainder of his wares," and when he wrote to him signed himself: "Your friend for life." Fauche adroitly distributed books, shoes, and silver crowns to our poor half-starved soldiers: "A distribution," he writes, "which I seemed to make purely out of compassion, while exclaiming at the sins of the Convention in leaving them thus destitute." He distributed pamphlets intended to "enlighten" the troops, and paid the editor of the *Gazette de Deux Ponts* 100 louis yearly for editing his sheet "in the most fitting spirit."‡ Pichegru himself, alas! was a victim of his generosity; and we feel a kind of melancholy shame in reading in Fauche-Borel's *Mémoires* the passage in which he states how, having followed the

* On September 22 Wickham gave Fauche a draft for 7,000 livres upon Carard et Cie, his bankers at Neuchâtel, and 1,000 louis in gold (Caudrillier, *Pichegru*, 95, in the *Correspondance de Wickham*).

† They arrived on September 29 and left on October 1.

‡ Caudrillier, *Pichegru*, 111-113.

victor of Menin to his retreat at Arbois, he furtively slipped beneath his travelling-rug a packet of 500 louis. Even he, the merchant of the human conscience, did not dare to place this gold in the hand of the glorious hero; a vestige of shame forbade the insulting act; perhaps he felt that to arouse the General's contempt for the politicians of Paris, to sap his energies, and to extinguish, in his demoralised soul, the fire of patriotism as it had been extinguished in the souls of so many others, was for ever to smirch the glory of the most famous and the most beloved of the Republic's Generals.

Montgaillard, as we have seen, looked forward to guiding the negotiations. He had the handling of all the reports drawn up by Fauche and his assistants for the benefit of the Prince de Condé—reports which he modified to his own advantage, by magnifying his own part as initiator, and doing his best to belittle the work of his collaborators. But his shrewd, cunning mind realised before long that he was being duped by his fellow-conspirators. Fauche was growing fat on his life of adventure,* while he who had conceived and engineered the whole affair had to live on miserable subsidies obtained by constant solicitation.† From the beginning of the year 1796 he remained at Rheinfelden with his little boy,‡ then nine years of age, and his faithful Du Montet. For three months he pretended that he had ceased to meddle with intrigue; but was he really as idle as he sought to appear? Fauche suspected him even then of selling piecemeal the secrets of his negotiations to the agents of the French Government. On February 22 the Directoire gave orders that Fauche and Courant should be arrested as "spies of the *émigrés* and the

* According to Montgaillard the negotiations with Pichegru must have resulted in nearly 280,000 livres passing through Fauche's hands (*Mémoires concernant la Trahison de Pichegru*, pp. 10, 12, 42, 62).

† "I was sometimes reduced to asking my own agents, those whose fortunes I had made, for a sum of 20 louis."

‡ Jerôme de Montgaillard, born in 1786. Montgaillard had another son, born in 1790. Both entered the French army, and died in the wars of the Empire.

foreign enemies of France"; and who but Montgaillard could have divulged their names? When in the spring of 1796 Pichegru was relieved of his command and summoned to Paris, was Montgaillard entirely innocent of the General's disgrace? Finding that this conspiracy had not brought him as much profit as he had hoped, he extricated himself from its toils; yet even so he made one final effort to derive advantage from it by denouncing it! And now we see him on the road, making for Italy by way of Karlsruhe, Stuttgart, Anspach, and Munich, where he spent some days in August. This devil of a fellow enjoyed the most singular immunities; his pockets were bulging with passports from many hands; he was able to travel through Europe in time of war as easily as we can walk the streets of Paris. On September 2 he arrived in Venice, boldly called upon Lallement, the Minister Plenipotentiary of the French Republic, a professional diplomatist, already of more than ripe years, "without talent, but sober and judicious and of a conciliatory temper."* Montgaillard assured the representative of France that he was henceforth ready to serve the nation as zealously as he had served the Bourbons, "not in the very least for reasons of interest or ambition, but because he wished to be associated with the glory of his native country."† While his blood was still warm with this patriotic protest he hastened to call upon d'Antraigues, the principal agent in Venice of Louis XVIII., who more than any had in his keeping the secrets of the *émigré* Court and nobility. Montgaillard placed at his disposal his well-known devotion to the cause of the legitimate monarchy, and in order to give proof of his tact and shrewdness he informed the agent of all the details of the Pichegru conspiracy, giving the names of the agents entrusted with the negotiations, and specifying the date of their attempts, the results obtained, and those which were still anticipated—precious information of which d'Antraigues, who took notes

* A. Bonnefons, *La Chute de la République de Venise*, 146.

† *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6145, quoted by Clément de Lacroix, *Montgaillard*, 36.

of Montgaillard's narrative, and informed himself thoroughly concerning the whole affair, hastened to draft a full statement at the dictation of his visitor. Thereupon Montgaillard left Venice; there was nothing more for him to do there. He would have liked to go to Milan, where there was a "little ragamuffin of a General," Bonaparte by name, of whom everybody was talking, and who, no doubt, would be "for sale";* but his diabolical intuition warned him that the enterprise would not be without its difficulties; so that on being repulsed by the outposts he did not insist, but withdrew in the direction of the Tyrol, returned to Mulheim, there found the Prince de Condé, and once again began to protest his undying attachment to the august family of the Bourbons. He was received coldly, but removing the mask he suggested that he was about to retire from politics, that he purposed to return to France, and that he would take with him all the confidential letters sent to him by the Prince de Condé during the Pichegru affair, unless the Prince paid him 12,000 francs for this correspondence, which would compromise many persons. The Prince agreed, and Montgaillard decamped with all possible haste, taking with him the draft for 12,000 francs—and also the papers. Fauche-Borel rushed off in pursuit of him; he was all the more interested in catching Montgaillard in that he had lent him 75 louis, and his name was mentioned on every page of the documents with which the fugitive's portfolio was crammed. He followed the trail to Neuchâtel and found his quarry in the Hôtel du Faucon. There followed a sharp discussion, a quarrel, a violent scuffle, and a bout of fisticuffs, from which Fauche-Borel emerged victorious, bearing with him, if not the precious documents, at least the description of

* There seems to be no doubt that Montgaillard conceived the idea of purchasing Bonaparte. Unwilling himself to undertake anything which might involve a certain degree of danger, he wrote to Fauche-Borel, requesting him to hasten to Italy "in order to attempt to carry through a matter of capital importance" (Caudrillier, *Pichegru*, 310); but Fauche, busily investing Wickham's guineas in Alsace and already beginning to regard Montgaillard with distrust, left his letter unanswered.

the place where they were to be found.* He took them from their hiding-place and sent them to Louis XVIII., never guessing that the most important had been removed or copied by Montgaillard, who, furnished with this viaticum, and doubtless with other talismans of equal potency, had returned to France, although an *émigré*, without a shadow of difficulty, with the conviction that the infernal vengeance whose germs he had treacherously sown promised fair to yield him, in the near future, a rich harvest.

He was a true prophet. A few days later—May 16, 1797—the French army captured Venice: d'Antraigues was arrested on the 21st at Trieste and taken to General Bonaparte's headquarters; and on him was found the detailed narrative, dictated by Montgaillard, of the criminal negotiations between Fauche-Borel and Pichegru. Bonaparte sent this document to the Directoire, which received it toward the end of June.† If it did not constitute a positive proof of treason, it none the less provided a terrible weapon to be used against Pichegru, who, only a month earlier,‡ had been elected President of the Council of Five Hundred. The conqueror of Holland enjoyed a great popularity, and everybody felt that the "Republic would end with a soldier," and the parties were looking to Pichegru for some decisive manifestation. The Directors themselves, the majority of whom were hostile to him, treated him with caution, and overwhelmed him with marks of respect. He, imperturbable, and by no means compliant, suspicious and distrustful, "*laissait dire, laissait faire, et se taisait*"; very modestly installed on the fourth storey of a house in the Rue du Cherche-Midi,§ he himself opened the door for his visitors, appeared to take a pride in his humble origin, and seemed to despise the advantages which his celebrity might have obtained for him.

* At the house of the widow Serini at Basle.

† Caudrillier, *Pichegru*, 338.

‡ 1 Prairial, year V.=May 20, 1797.

§ Apparently Pichegru had several addresses in Paris; one was in the Rue des Errancis near Monceau, and the other in the Rue de Clichy.

That summer of the year V. was a singular time: all Frenchmen, especially the Parisians, were in the frame of mind peculiar to the spectators of a drama to whom the drop of the curtain during the *entr'acte* has vouchsafed a few moments of respite. One knew that at the signal of some unknown stage-manager the curtain was about to rise upon something new, but on what no one could guess. It was universally believed to be impossible to maintain the system then extant, as the elections that spring had sent to the two Chambers a majority definitely anti-revolutionary, and it seemed that a provisional government with Pichegru as dictator was then a matter of the immediate future—Pichegru, the victorious soldier who would hasten to restore the Monarchy. The constitution did not provide the Directoire with any means of resisting the will of the two Councils: it enjoyed neither the right of dissolving them nor that of proroguing their sessions, nor that of postponing the execution of their decrees. In the event of a conflict only one means lay to their hands—the *coup de force ;** but it was the general belief that neither the ingenious Barras, nor the paltry La Révellière, nor the rapacious Rewbel, would assume the responsibility of so audacious an expedient, while the two remaining Directors, Carnot and Barthélemy, actuated by their hatred of their colleagues, had gone over to the reaction. What was not generally known was that Barras and his colleagues of the "Triumvirate," thanks to the astute indiscretions of Montgaillard, held in reserve against Pichegru a terrible weapon, and were preparing to strike him to the ground by revealing him before the people as a traitor to his country, who had received at his headquarters emissaries from the enemies of France and had taken money from foreign Governments. The Directoire had massed its troops in the neighbourhood of the capital. Augereau and his hussars were in Paris, ready to mow down the Royalists; but the latter were in force, and the leaders of the Vendéans and the Chouans went their ways

* Or, as we should say, "direct action," in the fullest sense of the term.—*Translator.*

about the city as though in a country already conquered. One might see there, moving about unmolested, Frotté, Bourmont, d'Autrichamp, Bruslart, la Rochejacquelein, Rivière, Polignac, and Puyvert—all those who for the last five years had been leading the peasants of Bas-Poitou, Maine and Normandy, in the deadly sport of hunting the Blues.* The *émigrés* were returning in hosts, thanks to false certificates of residence forged in London, which were sold to those arriving in all the ports of debarcation; they could even be obtained, in return for money, in the Ministerial offices, and there were many who declared that Barras was amassing a fortune by this vaguely clandestine traffic.† These returning exiles lived a life of gaiety; in their delight at treading once more the much-regretted pavements of Paris, they showed themselves in the fashionable restaurants and gaming-houses, rubbing elbows with the spies of Barras and the officers of the Directorial Guard. On the 17th of Fructidor, in the restaurant situated in the corner of the Rue du Bac, facing the bridge formerly known as the Pont Royale, the principal Royalist leaders met at dinner in the dining-room on the ground floor, while Augereau and his staff were making merry on the first floor. Night after night, in all the drawing-rooms of the city, one might rub elbows with people "newly arrived beyond the Rhine from England or from the Vendée, each having a pseudonym, and preserving a semi-incognito, since any absolute incognito was to them an impossibility, so incorrigible was their irresponsibility and so contagious their confidence. These pleasant folk were preparing for action by means of chaff and epigrams, even by puns; so that one might have believed, listening to them, that a few jests would be sufficient to overthrow the Republic. Their nickname for the Directors was the "Five Shillings," because in English "five shillings can be changed for a crown." Luxemburg had become "La Maison de Saint-Cyr" (*de cinq Sires*‡

* Chassin, *Pacification de l'Ouest*, iii., 45.
† Chassin, *Pacification*, 351.
‡ *Histoire secrète du Directoire*, i., 281.

—of five Princes); and they went into ecstasies over a pun perpetrated by a gambler: "Our cards are singularly mixed; we have in play five *Kings* (the Directors), and six *Knaves* (the Ministers); on the other hand, we have no *heart* (a pun upon *cœur*=Court); but we are surrounded by pikes (*piques*=pikes, but also, in card-playing, spades), and the Republicans will be left on the *carreau* (*carreau*= diamonds in card-playing; but the whole phrase means "will be killed on the spot," "left on the field," etc.).

Fauche-Borel observed with indignation the frivolity of "these Deciuses in black cassocks,"* for, as we may imagine, regarding his co-operation indispensable to the great events about to take place, he had hastened to Paris. By the middle of August—he was then installed in the Rue de Richelieu, at the Hôtel du Nord—he had come to the conclusion thàt Pichegru, indolent by nature, required firm guidance and the stimulus of encouragement; and we must not forget that the General's final success meant, for Fauche-Borel himself, a million francs, promised by the Prince de Condé, to say nothing of other advantages of an equally obvious nature. Morning after morning, with a manner that spoke of the mysterious nature and the importance of his mission, he waited on the future dictator, in order to enlighten him by the display of his own judgment and sagacity; for fully two years he had now been bombarding him with political opinions, and was keeping his eye upon him, so to speak, as though he had been a lottery ticket with which Fauche hoped to win the first prize. It is difficult to judge whether Pichegru really accepted with open mouth the long-winded maxims which the Swiss book-seller lavished upon him, as Fauche seems to believe, or whether, as Nodier assures us, unable to endure more of his eloquence, on accompanying the Swiss one day to the foot of the staircase, he addressed his aide-de-camp in the following words: "When this gentleman next calls you will oblige me by having him shot. . . ."†

* Fauche-Borel, *Mémoires*, ii., 140.

† Charles Nodier, *Souvenirs de la Révolution*, i., 86.

But the only thing that really matters is to discover just how important Fauche believed himself to be. Persuaded that he was one of the pillars of the Royalist cause, he was to be seen here, there, and everywhere, always busy, meddling in everything, always burdened with negotiations and preoccupations; running from pillar to post, "discussing matters with these aristocrats," and proud to gain the ear—possibly the somewhat inattentive ear—of the celebrated leaders of the party: the Comte de Bourmont, M. de Frotté, and the Prince de la Trémoille; strangely out of tune, among these heroic but seemingly heedless Muscadins, thanks to the solemn tone of voice which he now affected in speaking of himself and his diplomatic exploits, "with the glib assurance of a theologian preaching dogma."* On several occasions he had the honour of an interview with his Majesty Louis XVIII.; the Prince de Condé undertook nothing without his advice; and this signal favour—of which he never made any mystery, but rather the contrary—gave him a sort of prestige in the eyes of these valiant Royalists, who for five years had been fighting for princes whom they had never seen. Fauche was so sure of success that he did not even take the precaution of producing a false passport for inspection by the police. And on September 4 he was awakened in the morning by distant gunfire. He rose hastily, went down into the street, and glanced at the placards before which the passers-by were standing, dumbfounded. He read them: they contained a detailed account of his interviews with Pichegru at Blotzheim and Illkirck, as related to d'Antraigues by the indiscreet Montgaillard! And there was his own name sprawling across the sheet, as that of "the chief agent of the King and the English Government"—a flattering yet alarming description! The lightning which the Triumvirs had been holding in reserve had struck: Pichegru had been arrested; and the Royalist deputies were under lock and key. Carnot was dead or a fugitive; Barthélemy invisible. Barras was victorious, and the Terror resuscitated. What was he to do? He

* *Souvenirs de la Révolution.*

must find some place of refuge; but with whom ? He must leave Paris; but how ? Fauche started in the direction of Montrouge, the home of Mercier, the author of the *Tableau de Paris ;* a decent fellow, a familiar acquaintance, who would certainly give him shelter; but the gates of the city were shut, and he returned to the heart of Paris, where only the evening before he had numbered so many friends. But of all the doors on which he knocked not one opened to him; "*ces messieurs* had already gone to earth, or were making good their escape." And while the wretched man was wandering about the streets, expecting every moment to be seized by the agents of the Directoire, and seeing on every hoarding the announcement of the *coup d'état*, in which his own name was plain for all to read—did he ever reflect that he was the prime cause of the catastrophe ?—while the great services that he plumed himself upon rendering to the legitimate monarchy had, on the contrary, compromised it perhaps for ever; that he had destroyed those whom he had pretended to save; and that he would share in the responsibility for the shootings and deportations and imprisonments and pitiless reprisals of the weak yet triumphant Directoire ? But no; Fauche gave no thought to such disastrous repercussions, nor did he attempt to derive a lesson therefrom. Fortunately for him, he could not read the future; he could not foresee that along the inauspicious path on which he had entered, whether because of a childish love of fame or a passion for gain, all his undertakings would end in some similar disaster. For the moment he could think only of his vanished millions and the necessity of keeping his head on his shoulders. After protracted wanderings through Paris he returned to the neighbourhood of the Palais-Royal, and on passing the Cour des Fontaines he met a clerk employed in the Panckouke publishing-house,* with whom he had formerly had

* Charles Joseph Panckouke was the original publisher of the *Mercure de France* (for a time the *Mercure français*) and an unwieldy and never completed edition of the famous *Encyclopædie* in which all the articles were collected into a large number of subject dictionaries.—*Translator.*

business relations, and who lived close at hand. Fauche accosted him: "Can I go upstairs to your rooms for a moment?"—"By all means, Monsieur Fauche; go straight up; I just want to see what is happening, and I shall be with you directly." Fauche slipped into the house, and became somewhat calmer; but the clerk, when he reappeared, was pale and excited; he had just been reading the placards and had seen. . . . He was afraid of getting into trouble, and would be glad if his visitor would seek another refuge. Fauche obtained permission to remain there till nightfall, since to leave the house by daylight would be to risk his life. And there we see him, concealed in a wardrobe, while a police commissary who appeared upon the scene about midday began to carry out a domiciliary search.

After nightfall he once more wandered through the empty streets, whose silence was broken only by the galloping patrols of Augereau's hussars. He crossed the bridges without misadventure, plunged into the Faubourg Saint-Germain and finally brought up in the Rue Saint-Dominique before the Hôtel de Luynes. A provincial lawyer, who some time previously had installed himself in Paris as a printer—one David Monnier—had rented part of this noble and spacious dwelling, and had set up his presses in the great ruinous reception-rooms. Fauche had formerly dealt with this David Monnier as one bookseller with another, and the printer received him with delight: "You are in your own house," he said, "and you are safe; at the least alarm you have only to pull this cord. . . ." He himself pulled it, and a secret door opened, revealing a hiding-place contrived in the thickness of the wall. Monnier then led his guest to the garden of the old *hôtel;* into the trunks of the ancient trees standing near the garden-wall strong iron staples had been driven, forming ladders by which one could reach the top of the wall and jump down into the Rue de Grenelle. The house had been equipped in this fashion since the days of the Terror. Having in this manner reassured the proscribed publisher as to the dangers of an improbable search, Monnier showed him into "a handsome suite of

rooms upholstered in yellow satin," the relics of a bygone magnificence. For the rest, the printer seemed to accept the evil of the day with a cheerful heart; that evening Fauche took tea in the bosom of the family. On the following day there was a guest, "an Englishman, who might, on occasion, be of great service." "The Englishman" called again on the following day, and on this occasion Fauche's frank and genial manner charmed him to such an extent that he revealed his true identity. He was not a foreigner; his name was Botot, and he had for some years been acting as private secretary to Barras, who had favoured him by making him his most intimate confidant. The publisher, too, made no mystery of his identity; he confessed to being "that notorious Fauche-Borel," whose name was flaunted upon every wall, and he emphasised the fact "that he must not be regarded as a subordinate emissary of the Royalist cause, but as one of the chief agents of His Majesty Louis XVIII."; and he even displayed to Barras's secretary "the authorisation which he had received direct from the King."

Botot took the matter very well. They discussed the events of the day; Fauche praised the generosity and exalted political talents of the Princes whose "entire confidence" he possessed; and Barras's secretary, for his part, spoke in the highest terms of his employer's kindliness and intellectual powers; and they parted excellent friends.

Nothing enables us to penetrate the shallowness of the man's nature than his own confessions of the allusions that haunted his poor trivial mind during these terrible days of Fructidor. Pichegru, whom he had ruined, and whom he professed to love, was exiled to Cayenne; the aristocratic friends of whom the publisher was so proud the day before were fugitives or prisoners; the party which he served had been violently destroyed; and he himself had taken refuge in a stranger's house, while the spies of the Directoire searched the city for him. . . . All this was forgotten; his whole mind was given to devising a new intrigue; he would "corrupt" Barras; he would buy France from him

and sell it to the Bourbons; and the million which he was to have made over Pichegru he would now make over Barras. Already the different phases of this wonderful scheme were unfolding themselves in his mind; by means of Monnier he would win over Botot, and through Botot he would get at the Directors, and he saw himself in a Europe finally pacified by virtue of his diplomatic genius. He saw himself loaded with titles and wealth by grateful sovereigns; made free of the Court of the Tuileries; ennobled; a knight of this Order and of that; Director of the Royal Press. . . . He dreamed these dazzling dreams with his hand on the cord that opened the hiding-place into which he was to bolt in case of alarm, listening for the muffled sound of the heavy, rhythmic tread of the patrols led by the police who were searching the city for him. . . .

CHAPTER II

THE ROYALIST AGENCY

David Monnier and Botot, scenting in Fauche-Borel an empty visionary of inflated pretensions rather than a dangerous conspirator, decided that this simpleton was not worth arresting; it would be more serviceable to maintain a correspondence with this garrulous agent of the Bourbon Princes than to send him to Cayenne; they therefore procured for him a passport in the name of Louis-Frédéric Borelly, informing him, as an additional bait, that this favour was granted him by Barras himself, "as a mark of his loyal and open character." In order to facilitate his departure from Paris Monnier himself accompanied him, "in pursuance of a special order," as far as Charenton; promised to write to him, and accepted a draft for 7,200 francs, which the publisher slipped into his hands with his customary magnificence. Five days later Fauche crossed the frontier, reaching Neuchâtel after nightfall, to find his wife and children mourning his loss, for the news of his arrest and execution had entered Switzerland simultaneously with the news of the recent happenings in Paris. But he did not make a long stay in his modest native city; he was far from being safe* there; moreover, he felt himself too indispensable to consent to deprive the cause of the Bourbons of his services; and again, he was in a hurry to open the negotiations whose foundations he had so skilfully laid with those who were in the confidence of Barras; lastly, the

* "23 Fructidor, year V. The Executive Directorate decrees that the constituted authorities of Neuchâtel, in Switzerland, shall be invited and required to affix seals in the houses occupied by Fauche-Borel and Courant, formerly in the service of the King of Prussia, in which papers have been found relating to the Royalist conspiracy recently exposed in Paris" (*Archives nationales*, F^{7} 4370).

French army was threatening the principality of Neuchâtel, and he could not doubt that his capture was the end and aim of this manœuvre. Once again, then, he parted from his family, entered Bavaria, and arrived at Augsburg, where he found a fair number of "Fructidorised" exiles. There he was introduced to M. de Vezet and M. de Précy, both of them agents of Louis XVIII., and thus it was that he finally affiliated himself to that vast Royalist conspiracy whose threads were held by the proscribed King, and which counted, scattered all over France, indeed almost all over Europe, an infinite number of accomplices, whose history, should anyone ever succeed in writing it, will furnish the most amazing chapter of the most secret chronicles of the Revolution. The tragedy in which Fauche-Borel was to be involved would appear incredible, unless the chronicler were to find time for a preliminary portrayal of the singular company to which Fauche-Borel was thenceforth obliged to adapt himself. I am not, of course, suggesting that the historian must perforce present us with a complete picture of those secret agencies which were maintained in France by the Royalist party from 1792-1814, and their all but invisible ramifications; it is enough to determine certain landmarks in this almost unexplored wilderness; and to sketch a few of the more characteristic figures of this swarming host of nobodies. If this rapid survey seems unflattering the reader must not forget that the Royalists were ill-prepared for political propaganda: their convictions, instinctive rather than considered, were of a kind that can hardly be discussed; they depended less on reason than on a chivalrous devotion: hence their uncompromising fervour, and their wilfully blind faith in the success that was always at hand, and, as a natural result, their lack of foresight and their blunders.

After the great disappointments of 1792 the Comte de Provence, Regent of France since the death of his brother Louis XVI., had wandered from Coblenz to Namur, to Ham in Westphalia, to Leghorn and Turin; the summer of 1794 he spent on the territory of the Venetian Republic, at

Verona, and it was there that he hastily proclaimed himself King as soon as the rumour became current of the death of Louis XVII., in the Temple: an event long foreseen—we will not venture to say long desired; so long that Louis XVIII. had assuaged his impatience by "studying in special works the ceremonial of the Coronation"; he had even rehearsed, with his intimates, the principal scenes of the Coronation ceremony, "as though he had been on the very verge of leaving for Rheims." His Court at Verona was modest, although he obstinately clung to his part as King; at his *lever* he was arrayed according to etiquette, "decorated with his Orders, and girt with his sword, from which he parted only on going to bed." When he was not giving an audience he shut himself up in his own room, "and one heard him pacing up and down in a restless and excited fashion"*—the only exercise which his gout and his corpulence permitted. He never went out, but used to spend hours reading the *Moniteur* and other French newspapers; he called himself, and the Courts of Europe styled him, the *Comte de Lille*, and if a caller gave him his title of "Your Majesty," he sighed profoundly.† His table was but poorly provided and without refinement; his servants were ill-clad, and his rooms poorly furnished.‡

The Comte d'Avaray, his "Captain of Guards," was his great favourite; the intimate, inseparable friend: "a true friend, a sort of brother."§ Consumptive, melancholy, loyal, a man of honour, but pig-headed, he was of those who looked forward to terrific reprisals as the natural result of that joyful event, the restoration of the Monarchy. There were those who made fantastic demands to please him (p. 53): "forty-four thousand heads, one from each municipality," demanded the *émigré* Ferrand: "the hanging of all the survivors of the Constituent Assembly," said the Comte d'Oultrement; while "no compromises" was the advice of

* *Moniteur*, reprint, xxxii., 240.

† *Idem*, and Barras, *Mémoires*, ii., 109.

‡ Daudet, *Emigration*, i., 281.

§ "De Lanzac de Laborie, Le Roi d'Émigration" (*Le Correspondant*, May 25, 1907).

d'Antraigues. Others advised "the wholesale shooting down of the investors in national stock." The Duc de la Vauguyon, the "Prime Minister" of the exiled monarch, was more moderate, and was no favourite with d'Avaray; the Marshal de Castries, soon dismissed; the Baron de Flachslanden and the Marquis de Jaucourt completed the "King's Council"; while a few other nobles or gentlemen, a chaplain, a secretary, and two clerks completed his Court and provided the staff of his administrative departments. The old house in Verona was "the temple of ennui," and the faces of all who dwelt therein were "long and given to yawning."*

Yet this gloomy asylum had to be vacated. Bonaparte's army was approaching, and although it had no great fear of "all this riff-raff of Provence and Languedoc led by a rascally captain,"† the Most Serene Republic of Venice invited Louis XVIII. to take his departure. He protested, but he went, setting out *incognito*, on April 21, 1796, at three o'clock in the morning, in a light *berline*, accompanied only by his faithful d'Avaray, by the Bergamo–Saint-Gothard route, while Vauguyon, "who bore a close likeness to him," ostensibly took the road leading to the Tyrol.‡ The Comte de Lille crossed Switzerland, joining the army of the *émigrés*; on the night of April 28 he arrived at Riegel, in Brisgau, where the Prince de Condé had his headquarters.

Louis XVIII. might really have believed himself King of France, so enthusiastically did Condé's army greet him. Their faith was so fervent that they felt that in him victory was already theirs; and one of them, on the day when the whole army, regiment by regiment, was permitted to "attend his Court," beheld the exiled monarch, and was struck by the magnificence of their reception: "It was," he says, "in a wretched inn; instead of the throne-room a smoky parlour, with an usher, or one who fulfilled the offices of an usher, to open the door of the royal chamber; or rather

* *Moniteur*, reprint, xxvii., 241.
† The adjective is Alfieri's.
‡ Caudrillier, *Trahison de Pichegru*, 257.

a low, rickety door, for whose twofold valves he felt in vain, calling out to us, according to usage: 'Gentlemen, the King!' The King appeared, wearing the iron-grey uniform of Condé's staff, with a crown on the epaulettes; his figure, though not slender, did not then display the obesity from which he has suffered so greatly since; the upper part of his body was finely made, his head remarkable for its nobility and the regularity of the features, and that look of serenity which spelled confidence in the future. His voice was musical and decisive. He spoke to us of his situation, neither boastfully nor dejectedly, and of our devotion to his cause, with lively expressions of gratitude; and this without the slightest derogation from his exalted position. Had an ordinary mortal been placed in the same position, stripped of the prestige of royalty, the scene might have been merely ridiculous, à burlesque, even a vulgar and ignoble parody. Louis XVIII. had the power of ennobling it, of giving it a majestic character, of making it sublime. . . ."* This was the first time he had figured as King; he himself was intoxicated by the part, and acquired a taste for acting it; he got into the saddle, though riding was an exercise with which he was little acquainted, and appeared at reviews, at which, says Barras, with a sneer, "regiments of fifteen, ten, and even four men were to be seen." "Sire, there is your regiment of Auvergne!" Condé used to tell him in all seriousness; "there is your regiment of Champagne, your regiment of the Crown. . . . The drums beat the salute, the guns were fired. . . ."† But the presence of the King with the army embarrassed Austria, who, still counting on victory, was unwilling to share the profits thereof; he received orders to take his departure, and was forced to obey. . . . Where could he find an abiding-place? This wandering Bourbon alarmed all the Courts of Europe, for they feared, in giving him shelter, to draw down upon themselves reprisals from the French Republic. Only the Duke of Brunswick agreed, out of compassion, to receive him, on

* Comte Alex. de Puymaigre, *Souvenir de l'Émigration*, 430.

† Barras, *Mémoires*, ii., 111.

the condition that he must not live in the capital, and must put up at an hotel. Thus, at the end of August, 1796, the "Court of France" was installed at Blankenburg, at the foot of the Hartz mountains; a cold misty land, in a shabby little house inhabited by a grocer, "whose house-front was all glass windows, and his rooms barely habitable."* There were three rooms, and of them one became "the King's room"; the other was reserved for the "gentlemen of the bedchamber" then in attendance, and at the same time served as a chapel; while the third was "the gallery"—at one and the same time drawing-room and dining-room. Shades of Versailles!† In this hovel Louis XVIII. was fated to reign for eighteen months, if to reign is merely to say: "My people, my sceptre, my crown," and by an everlasting correspondence to maintain relations with the crowd of secret agents—or of agents believing themselves to be unobserved—who were scattered through every part of the "kingdom of France."

Even before the fall of Robespierre the King had in Paris an emissary, or rather a spy, for the purpose of watching and expediting the training of public opinion. This was Lemaître, referred to in letters by the names of "Letraine,"‡ "Buissy,"§ and "the Jew,"‖ and many others. Lemaître was a born conspirator; shifts and expedients, mysteries, hiding-places, danger and persecution and disguise were as necessary to him as bread and air to others.

* Montgaillard, *Souvenirs*, 219.

† There was in the neighbourhood a country-house of the Duke of Brunswick; but the Duke did not offer it, and no one ventured to ask for it. It was already something that he put up with the presence of the Comte de Lille on his territory while pretending to be unaware of it (Daudet, *Émigration*, ii., 36). However, towards the end of his stay at Blankenburg Louis XVIII. must have been living in the château; local tradition asserts that he did so, and the professional guides all swear to it; and forty years ago even the rooms which he occupied were pointed out.

‡ *Moniteur*, reprint, xxvi., 209.

§ Louis Blanc, *Révolution, Les Agents de Paris.*

‖ Chassin, *Pacification de l'Ouest*, ii., 129.

Secretary of the National Council of Finance under the old monarchy and domiciled in Paris since 1778, he had been committed to the Châtelet for distributing pamphlets produced by a secret printing-press which he possessed at Belleville. Twice he was welcomed by the Bastille, in company with Madeleine Castillon, otherwise Goton, his cook and accomplice.* When the Revolution came and he foretold its triumph he took up arms against it, although it might well have been greatly to his advantage; but he preferred to be a conspirator. We find him—or think to do so—among the *émigrés* at Basle in 1794;† he must have distinguished himself at the time of the Terror as an able man, and must have rendered the Royalist cause important services, which were not disclosed, since in Thermidor, despite antecedents of a far from reputable nature, Louis XVIII. appointed him his agent in Paris, and entrusted him with the management of the most important of the Royalist agencies.‡ One must suppose that Lemaître did not take matters very seriously; for even after the defeat of the insurrection of the Sections, on the 13th Vendémiaire, he did not observe the precaution of keeping within doors; he was "gathered in" by a police inspector at the Café de Valois, whither he had quietly repaired in order to read the papers and sip his coffee; and in the kitchen of his flat in the Rue Sainte-Croix de la Bretonnerie,§ scarcely hidden, but excellently classified, the whole correspondence of the Royalist agency was discovered, and Lemaître, tried before a military commission, was guillotined in the Place de Grève.‖ As he was one of the very few victims of the Convention's campaign of reprisals,¶ it was usually supposed that this persistent

* In December, 1785, and July, 1788. Funck-Brentano, *Les Prisonniers de la Bastille*, Nos. 5208, 5209, 5255.

† Louis Blanc, *loc. cit.*

‡ July 9, 1794. Chassin, *Pacification de l'Ouest*, i., 23, note.

§ *Moniteur*, reprinted, xxvi., 239.

‖ November 11, 1795. *Journal des Français*, 21 Brumaire, year IV.

¶ Lebois and Lafond de Soule were, with Lemaître, the only *Vendémiaristes* to be executed.

conspirator knew too much; "everybody hoped to see him disappear so that he should not disgrace or destroy anyone."*

Already by command of the King of Blankenburg a second agency was at work in Paris, consisting of the Abbé Brotier, the Chevalier Despomelles, and Duverne de Praile, all three being collaborators of the unfortunate Lemaître. Brotier,† a Hellenist of some repute, editor of Plutarch and the *Théâtre des Grecs*, although a great authority as to the ethic of Epictetus, was possibly deficient in the qualities of prudence and discretion required for such a delicate mission as that of representing the proscribed monarchy in Paris. He had the name of being quarrelsome and inconsequent. The Abbé Maury said of him: "If it were only a matter of causing trouble all round one could not find a better man than the Abbé Brotier; he would make the heavenly legions fall out!"‡ Despomelles, a sometime brigadier-general, was more amenable to discipline, but he lived at Bourg-la-Reine, and there busied himself almost exclusively with directing a vast society, which, under the name of the *Institut philanthropique*, spread its ramifications all over France. Despomelles was given to deluding himself as to the power of this secret society; "he was," writes Mallet du Pan, "one of those men who see belfries in the moon." Duverne de Praile, an ex-officer of the Royal Navy, a returned *émigré*, living, under the name of Dunan, on his estates in Nivernais, had come forward to offer his services to Louis XVIII. when the latter was passing through Zurich, in April, 1796; he had been employed on several

* Louis Blanc, *loc. cit.* In the year IV., by order of the Convention, the *Correspondance saisie chez Lemaître* was printed. A number of extracts were read from the tribune and printed in the *Moniteur*. Consult also the *Pétition pour Pierre-Jacques Lemaître*, 7 Brumaire, year IV.

† André-Charles Brotier, nephew of the great Latinist, Gabriel Brotier of the S.J., was born in 1751 at Taunay in Nivernais. Brotier's life, related by himself, will be found in the minutes of his trial before the Council of War, p. 143.

‡ The *Journal* of La Villeurnoy, published by Honoré Bonhomme, 213, note.

missions to England and the Vendée.* Such were the agents whom the brother of Louis XVI. authorised "to speak and act in his name in all that related to the re-establishment of the Monarchy."† To them he eventually added La Villeurnoy,‡ a sometime Master of Pleas, who lost his post in the Revolution; a shrewd man of distinguished manners, but needy, and anxious above all things to find a husband for his daughter, and obtain for himself the post of Minister of Police under the restored dynasty.§ The mission of this Royalist agency was to conciliate the military party, to corrupt the administration, and to prepare the way for the election of Royalists: an overwhelming task, which could scarcely have been carried out to a successful conclusion by political experts having a profound knowledge of the *personnel* of the Government, and of public opinion. The royal commissaries were novices, having the highest opinion of their own abilities, and far too liable to take their desires for accomplished facts; they were stage conspirators, extremely communicative to the first chance-comer, but regarding one another with a suspicious reserve; accusing one another of "imprudent tittle-tattle, secret ambition, lack of zeal, low greed, and even treason."‖

The first preoccupation of the King's representatives was the organisation of their offices, the enrolment of secretaries, and the filing of letters; "nothing was lacking but a cash-book and a list of the persons corrupted."¶ As may be supposed, the police were as well acquainted as they themselves with the activities of the agency, which was the centre of an incessant coming and going of accomplices and emissaries of all ranks, of a medley of turbulent spirits,

* A long account of the career of Duverne de Praile, written by himself, will be found in the *Débats de Procès instruit par le Conseil de Guerre permanent de la XVII^e Division militaires.*

† Letter of February 25, 1796. Chassin, *Pacification*, i., 23, note.

‡ Charles-Honoré Berthelot de La Villeurnoy, born at Toulouse about 1750.

§ Forneron, *Émigrés*, i., 307.

‖ Daudet, *Émigration*, ii., 21.

¶ Fernand Engerrand, *Ange Pitou, Agent Royalist et Chanteur des Rues*, p. 134.

of men in the King's pay, and even of traitors; a motley crew of men such as Rochecotte, the intrepid Chouan who offered with fifty men to kidnap the five Directors: Bourmont, who went by the name of Regnard, the King's chief agent in Brittany and the Vendée; the heroic and resolute Frotté, and his old regimental friend, Prince Louis de la Trémoille, both of the same age and equally devoted to the Royalist cause; a talented advocate, Jean-Marie-François,* an ex-*émigré* and ex-tutor to the Duc d'Angoulême and the Duc de Berry, who lived in the Rue de la Lune, in a room equipped with a revolving wardrobe, enabling the occupier to escape, in the event of an alarm, by a secret staircase;†—Carlos Sourdat,‡ a youth of twenty, small, sickly, brown-skinned, with profoundly black hair and eyebrows and eyes like living coals: a man of sincere and truthful mind and resolute courage;§ two elderly spinsters, silent and depressed, Madeleine and Josephe More de Prémilon, acting as secretaries to the agency;‖ Bénard, a clerk in the offices of the Directoire, doubtless one of those "corrupted" ones who had offered to win over Barras to the Royalist cause; the German baron, Leonard de Poli, lame, walking on crutches, commissioned more especially to enrol "likely young fellows" for striking the final blow;¶ Dandré, an ex-member

* Born at Chauffailes, Saône-et-Loire, in 1792.

† François, condemned to death in July, 1798, bought himself off by copious revelations, and was attached to the Ministry of the Police, where he remained until 1814. *Archives nationales*, F^7 6147, v. *Un Agent de la Police secrète, J.-M. François.* Communicated by M. Paul Montarlot to the Société l'Histoire contemporaine, 22nd meeting, June 20, 1912.

‡ His father, a magistrate of Troyes, offered, in December, 1792, to defend Louis XVI. before the Convention.

§ See the documents relating to Charles Philippe, known as *Carlos* Sourdat; in the *Archives nationales*, F^7 6407, and the *Archives administratives de la Guerre.*

‖ Fernand Enguerrand, *Ange Pitou*, 106 and note, 107 and note, 113 and note, 141-143, 270.

¶ The formula by which such persons were enrolled was as follows: "I the undersigned . . . promise and undertake to do my utmost to restore to his throne, Stanislas-Xavier, Louis XVIII. I hereby take the oath from Monsieur . . . I give my word of honour that

of the Constituent Assembly, the subservient friend of England "and anybody likely to pay,"* repulsively ugly but profoundly sagacious: one of those who was making a fortune by serving a king without a realm; Jouve, yet another of the "corrupt," the head of a department in the Ministry of the Interior, who had been won over to the Royalist party;† a popular singer, Ange Pitou, who was constantly being arrested, set at liberty, hooted and applauded, always singing his rhymes at the street corners; a great noble, the Prince de Carency, a young rake, a fascinating sceptic, who, as the son of the Duc de la Vauguyon, Louis XVIII.'s Prime Minister, was the depository of all the secrets of the Royalist conspiracy; a poor Norman Abbé, Julien-Réné Leclerc,‡ who had been living for four years, hidden now in the thickets of the Bois de Vincennes and now in Paris itself, fulfilling the "simulated functions" of a lawyer's clerk (an individual peculiarity of his was that he was "wall-eyed"); a tailor of sorts, transmogrified for the occasion into a "man of law with a commissioner's patent,§ who went by the name of Béranger-Mersix; he was one of the depositories of the agency's funds, and his little boy, who at this time was ten years old, remembered, at a later period, that his father employed him to take money to the conspirators, "which," he says, "they appeared to use more for their own individual requirements than for the accomplishment of their schemes."‖ This little boy was to become the poet, Béranger.

As a matter of fact, the country was flooded with English gold; the English *chargé d'affaires* in Switzerland, Wickham, was constantly in touch with the agency, by means of a

---

I will obey the leaders whom he may make known to me. I am not to take part in any undertaking unless I have been advised by him to do so" (*Débats du Procès :* Brotier, La Villeurnoy, etc., 131).

* Barras, *Mémoires*, ii., 472.

† Daudet, *Émigration*, ii., 59.

‡ Born at Bazoches-en-Houlme or Bazoches-sur-Bohène, Orne in 1762.

§ *Débats du Procès :* Brotier, La Villeurnoy, etc., 96.

‖ Beranger, *Ma Biographie.*

crafty but incorruptible emissary by the name of Bayard.* Wickham transferred money to the French capital by means of drafts on the banker, Jacques Martin, of Geneva, on the banker Audéoud,† in accordance with the instructions of his correspondent, opened a credit account in Bayard's name, but was astonished and perturbed when requested to pay so much money to a young man who declared, without further specifying, that he was "engaged in commerce." He sometimes paid him as much as 4,000 louis, which, in those days of assignats, represented an almost fabulous sum. Now Bayard, when in Paris, lived with his mistress, a Mme. Mayer, "formerly a comedy actress," who kept a restaurant in the Rue de la Loi,‡ which Bayard had set up at a cost of 20,000 francs. There he was often visited by a certain "Julien," who was none other than the young Prince de Carency. When he was not living with his father, the Duc de la Vauguyon, at the Blankenburg Court, Carency was an assiduous frequenter of Mme. Mayer's establishment, drawn thither by the charms of the ex-comedienne and the hope of meeting Bayard, who was "stuffed with gold." For the handsome young prince spent freely, and was not over-scrupulous in his methods of obtaining money. Only a year earlier he conceived the idea of introducing himself to the authorities of Frankfort as the Spanish Ambassador to the Emperor of Austria, and of borrowing, in his pretended capacity, a considerable sum from the wealthy bankers of the city! The escapade was rumoured abroad, and Brotier, Duverne de Fraile, and La Villeurnoy, the three representatives in Paris of Louis XVIII., turned a cold shoulder, as far as possible, to the son of their sovereign's Prime Minister.

About the end of the year 1796 Bayard set out for Switzerland on a mission to Wickham; Carency, profiting by Mme.

* It is difficult to determine which of the three brothers of this name was Wickham's confidant. Charles, Louis, and David Bayard seem to have served the Royalist cause simultaneously, and were on the books of the police as the agents of England.

† *Le Redacteur*, 21 Germinal, year VII.; quoted by Anlard, *Réaction thermidorienne*, v., 462.

‡ Rue de Richelieu.

Mayer's grass-widowhood, offered to replace her lover in the lady's good graces, and in order to present himself in the most favourable light, he revealed his actual identity and that of Bayard, to say nothing of the exalted political interest which it was his duty to foster; and, finally, he divulged the whole secret of the conspiracy. The result was not what he expected; instead of being flattered, Mme. Mayer took alarm and disappeared;* and Carency, deprived of his mistress and his friend, as well as the money which he obtained, now from one of them and now from the other, began to feel that the conspirator's trade is not all roses. This was the moment when the Royalist commissaries regarded the preliminaries of the Restoration as so far complete that they were thankful to have at hand, in Paris, a prince of the blood royal in all readiness to seize the crown. Louis XVIII. reserved this glorious though easy task to his nephew, the Duc de Berry, then nineteen years of age. One of the members of the Royalist agency, Duverne de Praile, had undertaken the journey to England in order to prepare for the young prince's entry into France; he was ready to answer for the prince's head as he would for his own; he would bring him through Holland and Belgium to Saint-Omer; thence he would accompany him to the outskirts of Paris, get him a police permit to enter the city, where a score of safe places of refuge would be open to receive the forerunner of the King.† The matter was finally arranged, and Duverne returned from London, proud of another success; he had persuaded the English Ministry to pay the agency 300,000 francs monthly, plus 188,000 francs " to clothe the royal troops !"

And all collapsed in one brief half-hour ! On January 31, 1797, Duverne, Brotier, and La Villeurnoy, faithful to their

* Nine years later the Imperial police were still seeking him in vain. Louis Bayard also could not be found; and his brother Charles committed suicide; David, a Government clerk, likewise suffered eclipse. Concerning the Bayards and Mme. Mayer, *vide* d'Hautrive, *La Police secrète*, (i.), No. 951; (ii.), in the list of persons; and the *Archives nationales*, F^7 6217, 6295, 6457.

† Daudet, *Émigration*, ii., 48.

mission of " skilfully winning over the officers of the army," had met together at the rooms of Major* Malo, whom they believed themselves to have converted, and whom they had promised to meet at the military college in which he and his dragoons were quartered. Malo had concealed two of his men under his bed; he received the ingenuous conspirators, who already had no secrets from him; they showed him, without the least distrust, the full authorisation which they held from His Majesty Louis XVIII., and with which they had taken great pains to provide themselves. Immediately they were all three seized by the soldiers, taken to the central office, then to the Tower of the Temple, which had once more, shortly before this period, become a State prison. The Royalist agency in Paris had ceased to be. The effect of this arrest was, for the little world that collected about it, like the stroke of a spade in an ant-heap: and each ran for safety at the top of his speed. The Chevalier Despomelles, the only one of the royal commissaries who was still at liberty, had time to destroy the more compromising of the documents preserved in the archives; other papers were hastily burned by Duverne de Praile's sister;† Carlos Sourdat took charge of the blank commissions signed by the King, and the propagandist portraits of Louis XVIII.;‡ as for poor Abbé Leclerc, the

* *Chef d'escadron.—Translator.*

† Duverne, whatever may have been said of him, was not married. During his interrogatory the President of the Council of War asked him: " Are you married ?"—" No, citizen." " Yet you have stated that you were."—" No, citizen, I am not; I have been living for the last four years with a sister who had the generosity to share my lot; she came to Paris with an orphan child whom she removed from a convent; I hoped by this means to save appearances; and it is under this disguise that we have lived together as man and wife " (*Procès*, 271).

‡ Many of these were seized later in his rooms; some will be found under his name in the *Archives nationales*, F 6407. The portraits bear the inscription, *Qui oserait se venger quand le Roi pardonne ?* The patents, bearing the seal of France, and intended for members of the Council of Elders, are worded thus: " We have given and give by these presents to M. ——, member of the Council of Elders, the power to deal in our name, and on conditions that may seem to him

wall-eyed gentleman, he made away with Brotier's papers and the Crosses of Saint-Louis which the royal commissaries had the right "to make and distribute."* The police therefore laid hands only on those documents which the conspirators did not contrive to destroy, with the following grotesque result: among the papers seized was a noble and generous proclamation of Louis XVIII., which the agency had had the greatest difficulty in distributing. This was now published in the *Moniteur*† and quoted by a number of other newspapers; the impression produced was immense, and the Chevalier Despomelles was able, without boasting, to write to the King: "Your Majesty can have no idea of the marvellous effect produced by your proclamation. . . . It has won for you a host of partisans. . . ." So that the arrest of his commissaries did more for the King's cause than ever their blundering devotion was able to do!

A tale worth telling is that of the audacious attempt made by one of the royal agents—probably by Sourdat—to get the rest out of prison; nor should it be forgotten how, when he learned that they were about to appear before the Council of War, the valiant Ange Pitou, the street singer, did his utmost to save them by buying their judges; and on this "purchase" he spent all the money earned by the lampooning Government and the sums which he borrowed on his own security from Royalists no richer than himself;‡ how, a few days before the trial,§ Duverne de Praile, over-

suitable, with those of his colleagues who may wish to serve us, giving our royal word to fulfil the pledges which he may have given them, on condition, however, and not otherwise, that the aforesaid pledges shall have been ratified by the person who shall on our behalf give him this present authorisation. Given under our signature and our ordinary seal, April 5, 1797.—Louis." This document, it will be seen, is post-dated; probably with a view to that year's elections.

* Concerning the manufacture of the Crosses of Saint-Louis by the agency, see the *Procès* of Brotier, 219.

† Decadi, 20 Pluviôse=February 8, 1797.

‡ Fernand Engerrand, *Ange Pitou*, 141 *et seq.*

§ 11 Ventôse, year V.=March 1, 1797.

come with terror, " even before he was given the assurance that his life was safe, as he had demanded," revealed the whole of the agency's operations, denouncing all the confederates and "giving particulars of their place of residence, their resources, their dependants";* how, seeing the spring at which he drank running dry, the cynical Carency placed himself at the disposal of the police, so that the Directors had the pleasure of seeing this gentleman, this Paul-Maximilien-Casimir de Quelen de Stuer de Caussades de la Vauguyon, Prince de Carency, who married Mademoiselle de Rochechouart-Faudoas, brother-in-law of the Ducs de Richelieu and de Pienne, the son of the exiled King's Prime Minister,† selling his honour, his name, his employer, and his friends to pay for his debauchery.‡ Those interested in the period should also examine the trial of the conspirators before the Council of War sitting at the Hôtel de Ville: besides Brotier, La Villeurnoy, and Duverne, whose companions had no suspicion of his treachery, the Baron de Poly, Carlos Sourdat, Béranger-Mersix, and the demoiselles More de Premilon, and a dozen or so of obscure accomplices were brought before the judges. After three weeks of pleadings§ the first four accused were unanimously declared guilty and sentenced to death, which sentence was immediately commuted by the Court, again by an unanimous vote, to a few years' detention. The revelations of Duverne de Praile||

* Barras, *Mémoires*, ii., 322. Barras gives the text of Duverne's statements.

† It is true that since March 1, 1797, the Duc de la Vauguyon, caught by Louis XVIII. in the perpetration of an indelicate and indiscreet action, had been dismissed by the King, and replaced by the Comte de Saint-Priest.

‡ Carency, after the most extraordinary series of fraudulent and criminal actions, repudiated by all, even by his father, died insane in a Paris madhouse at the time of the Restoration. He left no posterity.

§ From 22 Ventôse to 11 Germinal.

|| In reality Duverne, in saving his own head, saved those of his companions too, since the tribunal could not inflict unequal penalties on conspirators found to be equally guilty. . . . Monsieur E. Daudet remarks that Louis XVIII., indignant at the outset over the defection of his representative, afterwards became less

and the money of Ange Pitou* had helped to soften the severities of repression. Brotier, Duverne, and La Villeurnoy were imprisoned in the Tower of the Temple, where they ran some danger of being forgotten.† The actions of the Government were so chaotic during the spring of 1797, and the Government officials of all ranks and categories believed so little in the duration of the Directoire, that imprisonment did little to abate the activity of the royal commissaries; from the depths of their cells they continued to collaborate in the "labours" of the dissolved agency, of which only one member—Despomelles—remained at liberty. He corresponded with a Royalist Committee stationed at Augsburg, of which Wickham was the leading member. But this was only an expedient; the Monarchy had too many supporters in France for the King to lack an all but official representative in Paris; so that the prisoners in the Temple were able to appoint the Abbé d'Esgrigny to the perilous distinction of replacing them.

The extraordinary romance of this obscure Royalist imperfectly enables us to realise what must have been the life, during the Revolution, of many another of whom history has recorded neither the names nor the adventures. The Abbé Esgrigny, sometime vicar-general under Inge de Cicé, Archbishop of Bordeaux,‡ an *émigré* of 1792, who took part in the expedition to Quiberon, escaped execution

---

harsh. At the time of the Restoration Duverne was even given a pension, and pensions were not easy to obtain, as some of the Monarchy's most faithful servants knew to their cost (*Émigration*, ii., 61).

* The demoiselles More de Prémilon always insisted that they owed their acquittal to the activities of the street singer (F. Enguerrand, *op. cit.*, 141-2).

† Duverne was actually forgotten; but the other two, in Fructidor, without further trial, must have been added to the deported *émigrés*, for both died in Cayenne.

‡ The *Royal Almanach of* 1791 mentions an Abbé d'Esgrigny as incumbent of the Abbey of Doudeauville, in the diocese of Boulogne. The revenue of this abbey was 13,000 livres.

by an ingenious subterfuge,* and spent a year wandering about Brittany and through the Vendée, rarely sleeping beneath a roof, living on roots, tracked by the hounds of the Blues, which were trained to hunt the Chouans. A charitable woman, Mme. de la Bougonière, being told of his sufferings, offered him a refuge in her house; but to reach Angers, where she lived, the Abbé had to tramp across the Bocage and Anjou, travelling only by night and never venturing to follow the highways. He reached his goal exhausted, and immediately began to exercise his priestly functions and to correspond with the Royalist leaders. Now Mme. de la Bougonière was sister to La Revellière-Lépeaux, one of the five Directors, and the most hostile "to priests and kings." It was thus in the house of the nearest relative of this fanatical enemy of religion that a priest, in defiance of the laws of the Republic, celebrated Mass and carried on a correspondence with the enemies of the State. Thither a warning was sent to him to repair to Paris, there to fulfil an important mission. He set out for the capital, always hiding himself, succeeded in passing the barriers, reported himself to Rochecotte, and assumed the temporary management of the agency, which elicited a flattering letter from the King: "I shall never forget the services which Monsieur l'Abbé d'Esgrigny rendered me at a time when they were of the greatest value to me, and involved the greatest danger to himself."† But the task was too unaccustomed for this poor priest, who had so long lived the life of a vagabond.‡ Despomelles had fled, full of resentment, and the Royalist agency was left without an effective head. A leader was wanted, but there was a

* He pretended to be a sailor pressed into service by the English, and played his part with such simplicity and truth of detail that he even signed his declaration by "making his mark" (Chassin, *Pacification*, i., 581).

† D'Esgrigny reached Paris on February 22, 1797, a month after Brotier's arrest.

‡ On August 29, 1815, the Abbé d'Esgrigny was shot down by men in ambush in the neighbourhood of Nîmes. He remained twenty-four hours lying in the road, without help, and died after cruel suffering.

dispute as to the suitability of the possible candidates, and the Abbé d'Esgrigny, pestered and disappointed, sought to resign from his post. So matters stood at the approach of Fructidor; the frivolity and imprudence of the Royalists, together with their disagreements and quarrels, and their everlasting illusions, had compromised the organisation, which no one took very seriously; and this at the very moment when France, weary of disorder and intrigue, was calling for a strong, honest, and stable Government, which would restore the serene prosperity of which she had been deprived for so many years. The picture would be too incorruptible if it did not contain at least a few specimens of the host of emissaries, useful or the reverse, of needy persons blessed with more impudence than skill; of thoughtless imbeciles and Utopians, who, by reason of their actual devotion to the cause, or in their own interests, voluntarily placed their often blundering and compromising zeal at the service of the King and his agents. A good number of Royalists, accustomed for years to the insecure life of the Chouan, found in these precarious undertakings "a sort of satisfaction" in going from one hiding-place to another, in leading this life of romantic and perilous adventure, "to which the men of this party have so long been accustomed."* They ran the risk of death or deportation, or at least imprisonment; but for them danger was only a further attraction, and the game of matching their cunning against that of the police was a spur to their activities.

In the first rank of those whose names will again appear in the course of this narrative we must mention the Abbé de la Marre:† "Forty to forty-five years of age, a tall handsome man, with black hair, powdered, stout and strongly built"; as for his morals, if we are to believe a leaflet published by the police, he was an "atrocious scoundrel," who had formerly been intimately connected

* Pasquier, *Mémoires*, ii., 34.

† André, *alias* Delamarre, *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6371-6442; d'Hauterive, *Police secrète*, i., 513; ii., 707, 865, 1282-1428.

with Saint-Just and certain members of the Committee of Public Safety. He had friends in every camp, for although he had left France his name was erased from the list of *émigrés*. By virtue of this immunity he once more left the country, presenting himself at Blankenburg, won d'Avaray to the Cause, and obtained the confidence of the King, whose favourite courier he became: a sort of nomad plenipotentiary. He was constantly travelling to and fro between Germany, Switzerland, and Paris, crossing frontiers without hindrance, and never arousing anybody's suspicions; scarcely troubling to conceal his presence even at Fontainebleau, during the days that followed upon Fructidor; and he resumed his journeys, carrying the King's plans and instructions to the Royalist agencies or foreign ministries, scouring the highways in the company of a manservant, " pale, with a large nose," in a " very pretty English chaise, small, and brand new, and painted yellow," which was pointed out by the spies whom the French Government maintained in all the principal cities of Europe. He gave his name sometimes as Falike, now as Bellecombe or David Pachoud—a simple precaution which put all the police off the scent. He had rooms at Leipsic, in the house of a tobacconist named Wagner; and it was there that he extended his hospitality to his friend d'Avaray. Later, in London, in a fit of madness or disgust, he denounced to the Comte d'Artois " all the lies and peculations of the principal Royalist agents," and to all those whom he thus accused he sent a list of their offences and of his own grievances. Banished from England as the result of the ensuing scandal, he was deported to North Germany, and this exile put an end to his diplomatic career.

Another priest, the Abbé Ratel,* although usually mentioned as " the Prince's chief agent," was actually less conspicuous than La Marre. It was not that he was inactive; an accomplice of Brotier's, and, like the latter, condemned to deportation, he escaped, made his way into Normandy, and at Rouen established a clearing-house for Royalist corre-

* Louis-Jean-Baptiste-Justin Ratel, born at Saint-Omer.

spondence; escaping to England, he was requested by the British Cabinet to convey a large sum of money to the militant members of the party, and returned to France under the name of *Lemoine*, but remained there only for a very brief period; he returned to London, and there lived "a gay life," concocting ambitious schemes which were never put into practice. Is it possible that he was that Abbé R—— who offered in 1800 to "strike down the First Consul ?"* When he was asked to account for the money entrusted to him, his figures were so far from intelligible that he was given no further employment; the more so as, since he had concerned himself with politics, his conduct had been anything but exemplary, a young woman of the name of Julienne Sper being too often concerned in his adventures. Consequently, when, after the Restoration, he ventured to demand a reward for his services, Louis XVIII.'s government intimated that his presence in Paris was not desired, and he returned to England.†

Then there was a certain Marquis de Besignan:‡ a most zealous Royalist, but a rash and hare-brained person. In 1792 he fortified the Château de la Drôme, armed his dependants, and sustained a siege against the troops of Général d'Albignac, who had to employ artillery in order to defeat the rebel, to whom, out of compassion, he granted "two hours in which to disappear." Besignan buried himself in the mountains of Forez, where he raised about three-score vagabonds, by whose assistance he proposed to defeat the Revolution. A little later we find him in Rome, imploring the holy Father to assist him in his scheme, and then at Mulheim, in the camp of Condé. He proposed a scheme of a vast insurrection in Lyonnais, Velay, Auvergne, Bresse, and Provence. Wickham provided him with money, though he had no great confidence in him, and tried to prevent his leaving Switzerland; but Besignan, thirsting

* Aulard, *Paris sous le Consulat*, i., 638.

† *Archives nationales*, F^7 6439 and 6,624; and d'Hauterive, *Police secrète, passim.*

‡ Pierre-Charles-Joseph-Marie Duclaux, Seigneur de Bésignan, born at Mirabel, district of Nyons, in La Drôme.

for action, left Geneva for Lyons, taking with him in his luggage a bulky package of letters and memoranda addressed to the King: five hundred documents, "constituting the most remarkable collection of documents relating to the counter-revolutionary crusade, with an interminable list of the secret numbers of the party." With his mind wholly absorbed by his far-reaching schemes, Besignan forgot that the French Customs would inspect his portmanteaux; and the collector at the frontier station of Megrin, amazed by this mass of documents, seized them, and sent them to his superior officers, who forwarded them to the Directoire. This was the end of the insurrection in Lyonnais, and this was the most famous exploit of the Marquis de Besignan. D'Avaray said of him: "He is the sort of imbecile who would get the Almighty Himself into trouble."* As for Danican,† everybody was agreed: "He was the vainest, most garrulous, most boastful, and at the same time, the most insignificant of men," said Real.‡ A soldier in the regiment of Barrois in 1782, and in 1789 a gendarme, his advance was rapid: four years later he was a general of brigade, and in 1795 he commanded a division, despite a few set-backs in his career. It was said that he was protected by Camille Desmoulins, and that he was counted as one of Robespierre's bodyguard.§ How did this pure revolutionist find himself invested with the command of the insurgent Royalist sections, when they rose against the Convention on the 13th Vendémiaire? This is a phenomenon which no one was ever able to explain, and himself least of all. And it was owing to this inexplicable promotion that for one night of his life he was the adversary—but an adversary soon put to rout—of Bona-

* Bésignan, *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6430 and U 1021; Daudet, *Émigration*, ii., 9 *et seq.*; Caudrillier, *Trahison de Pichegru*, 162; A. Rochas, *Biographie du Dauphine*.

† Louis-Michel-Auguste Thevenet, *alias* Danican, born at Paris, parish of Saint-Séverin, March 28, 1764, son of a clerk in the Pensions Office. His mother was one Marie Guérin.

‡ *Essai sur les Journées de Vendémiaire*, 56.

§ Barras, *Mémoires*, i., 148.

parte. A great honour this for a strategist of his calibre! He was already far away when the military commission of the Théâtre Français sentenced him to death. In England, where he took refuge, his semi-celebrity was rewarded by a pension of 12,000 francs. To earn this pension the General went up and down Europe concocting schemes of attack against the Republic, not one of which ever came within measureable distance of achievement. He waited on the King at Blankenburg, and called on Wickham in Switzerland; his pose was that of the braggart bully; and he was accused, without proof, of murdering the plenipotentiaries at Rastadt; he threatened to break his journey in Paris in order "to carry off" the Directoire; later on he spoke of suppressing Napoleon. The police reports made a sort of bugbear of him; but as he never attempted to accomplish anything he was soon forgotten. When Louis XVIII. regained his throne, Danican felt that the moment had come for wholesale vengeance; but he obtained nothing, neither a post nor a crown-piece, and died miserably at Itzehoe in Holstein in the year 1848. The proscribed Monarchy was not dependent on such men only; many wise and moderate thinkers remained resolutely faithful to it, serving it actively but unobtrusively: such were Imbert; Colomes, sometime senior alderman of Lyons; Camille Jordan, another native of the Lyonnais, whose uprightness and purity of mind were impeccable; de Vezet, the aged President of the Parliament of Besançon; Précy, the unfortunate hero of the Lyonnais insurrection against the Terror; and many others whose co-operation, although more efficacious than that of these noisy persons, remained purposely inconspicuous. We may, indeed, feel certain that they must have deplored the futile excitement of so many rash and thoughtless persons: one might almost say, of so many confirmed imposters, who were impelled by poverty to hope for the eventual success of the Royalist cause, as a profitable speculation, and who flung themselves headlong into it, all the more noisy and boastful because they were conscious that

their sole qualification was their impudence, while the only factor that made for ready action was their longing to make themselves conspicuous or to put a little money into their pockets. "They were spectres of the night," wrote Mallet du Pan. Their number was legion, and to recognise them was an easy matter, so preposterous was the lack of proportion between the stupendous task which they offered to perform and the modesty of the salary which they demanded: witness, that unknown person who, for seven hundred and twenty francs, undertook to purchase the five Directors, and bring them, subdued and repentant, to the King's footstool; or that other, who, later on, begged for the dispatch of a dozen louis which were needed to bring Bonaparte over to the Bourbon party; or that physician of Gex, who proposed to the Prince de Condé that he should "introduce the pest into France."* Apart from importunate beggars who were obviously insane and fanatics offering to use their daggers, Louis XVIII. never repulsed anybody; he replied to all; not because he expected to derive any advances from these extravagances, but because he was unwilling to discourage any form of devotion, no matter how obscure or absurd it might be. Although every hour of his exile taught him a lesson, and although he gradually acquired "that great virtue of royalty" of which Casanova speaks, "which is known as dissimulation," he was always credulous in respect of anyone who flattered him. He was surrounded by suspicious councillors whose attachment to him ought to have put him on his guard: d'Avaray protected him from the curiosity of the indiscreet; the Duc d'Havré warned him of the danger of employing persons "who, enjoying little credit or consideration, compromise both those whom they serve and those who recommend them";† but they themselves, out of their affection for their master, used to listen to all sorts of tricksters whose boasts sought to foster their illusions. But after all, what do these trivial matters signify? Louis XVIII. knew that he was

* d'Hauterive, *Police secrète*, ii., 214.

† Daudet, *Émigration*, ii., 385, note.

armed with the weapon that no human power could either diminish or destroy—namely, his "right." He had no resources and no permanent abiding-place; he could not even afford to buy livery for his menservants, or to keep a decent table; but he was the King of France; and it was because no one in the world could deprive him of this title that wars were waged and the thrones of Europe shaken. Whosoever might usurp his place—whether a dreaded tyrant or an invincible conqueror—he could never be anything more than an adventurer, an ephemeral creature of the day; he himself had no wish that matters should be otherwise; his disappearance would not affect that which was imprescriptible and preordained; his own death would be only a passing incident, and this belief was constantly present in his mind; it was at once his religion, his creed, his absolute conviction. On the day when he left Condé's army, at Villingen, in the Black Forest, the bullet of an assassin, whose identity remained unknown, had grazed his forehead. Those about him were overcome with alarm and indignation. "Think!" one of them exclaimed, "if it had been a fraction of an inch lower down!" "Well, well!" was Louis XVIII.'s comment: "the King of France would then have been called Charles X." This was his whole policy, and the skill of the most expert diplomatists, no less than the might of armies, found itself baffled by this impregnable rock.

This brief explanation of the needs and the men at the disposal of the Royalist party is necessary if the reader is to understand the incidents about to be related. Without these prefatory remarks he might justifiably be astonished that on reaching Augsburg with its population of *émigrés*, Fauche-Borel should for a moment have been taken seriously. There were then in Augsburg all the "sound thinkers" of the party, including what was known as the "Swabian agency"—Précy, de Vezet, Imbert, Colomès, Dandré—to say nothing of a certain number of the "Fructidorisés," who were stationed there in order to keep in touch with Wickham, the chief distributor of the millions of

England. These men, though anything but fools, had all had to do with so many visionaries and exploiters that they had lost all count of their blunders and their frauds; so, whether by virtue of their unfailing courtesy, or because they believed that the negotiators of the *Affaire Pichegru* might render important services to the cause, the Neuchâtel bookseller received a more than usually cordial welcome. Only too ready to believe himself a person of consequence, the reliance placed in him and the courtesy with which the *émigrés* listened to his applications had the result of giving him an altogether exaggerated opinion of his own importance. Unfortunately, everything helped to maintain this illusion, and when, on leaving Augsburg, he proceeded to Berlin, since there was a general eagerness to question one who had escaped from France, he was invited to dinner by the Prince of Reuss, to meet His Excellency Count Panin, the Russian Ambassador, His Highness Field-Marshal Repnin, the Tsar's Envoy Extraordinary, and Lord Elgin, the English Ambassador to the King of Prussia. Fauche interested them all "keenly"* by what he told them of the 18th Fructidor and of Pichegru; he confided to his eminent fellow-guests—and at the same time to all the servants moving round the table—"the plan which he had conceived of winning over Barras to the cause of the Bourbons." "All that I told them seemed to make an impression on them," he writes; and this we may accept as the truth, for these diplomatists by trade, taciturn and impenetrable by professional habit, must have regarded this conspirator, who was confiding, through them, in all the cabinets of Europe, as something quite unique. He was quite ready to explain matters to King Frederick William, and begged for an audience, which he did not obtain; and the reason why the King did not avail himself of the bookseller's counsel was because he "did not wish to oppose the policy of his Ministers." Fauche had therefore to content himself with explaining his views to Count Haugwitz, Minister of Foreign Affairs and President of Council. What impressed

* *Mémoires*, ii., 196.

him at this interview was the fact that the head of the Prussian Cabinet had donned full uniform to receive him, and was wearing all his decorations. Haugwitz rose from his armchair to welcome his visitor, who, "very much at his ease," spoke "without disguise . . . of the danger of allowing the Revolution to overrun the whole of Europe" —a subject both vague and stupendous.

His Excellency listened "with great attention," and expressed his gratitude in the following words, which were reported verbatim: "What you tell us, Monsieur Fauche, is of great value, and we ought to be grateful to you."* Upon which the bookseller withdrew and made ready to leave for London, "whither he had been summoned by the British Ministry." So he assures us, perhaps in good faith, for there was no doubt that the unfortunate man was even then the victim of a somewhat infrequent form of aberration, which we might describe as diplomatic megalomania. The crises of this form of insanity followed one another henceforth with progressive intensity, until the day, as yet remote, when the poor man died of his malady in a final fit of delirium.

In the summer of 1798 he took ship for England, and there again he confided to any who would listen to him that he was preparing to "corrupt" Barras, and by this stroke would bring to a close the age of revolutions. He gave certain advice to the British Cabinet, and pointed out the direction to be followed in order to obtain decisive results;† roused the Royalist agents from their torpor, and in his capacity of adviser found his way into the closets of all the British statesmen. "All Courts," writes La Bruyère, "are subject to the appearance of adventurers, men of a free and easy disposition, who push themselves forward and protest that they possess, each in his particular sphere, all the skill lacking in others, and are accepted at their own valuation." Fauche-Borel was such a man. When at the beginning of the winter he decided to return to Hamburg a disagreeable surprise awaited him: he had expounded his scheme of corrupting Barras so often, and to so many

* *Mémoires*, ii., 200. † *Ibid.*, ii., 206.

persons, that a certain *émigré*, Monsieur de la Maisonfort, for whose benefit he had gone over the points of his conspiracy, had taken it for his own, thinking it to be a fruitful idea, and had prided himself upon it in the hearing of Louis XVIII. Fauche started a hue and cry after his lost idea; but in vain did the unfortunate bookseller lay claim to the invention of the *affaire*, endeavouring to eject Maisonfort from the position which he had appropriated, and to resume the leading part in Hamburg: a task which absorbed him during the whole of 1799. He ran from Hamburg to Berlin, to Mitau in Courland, where Louis XVIII. was then to be found, and settled down at Wesel on the Rhine, in order to be within easier reach of the spies whom Barras sent out to keep an eye on him, and whom he stupidly took to be emissaries. Fauche himself was confident of success, and it may be that in this he was not the victim of his illusions, for it is quite possible that Barras had conceived some idea of selling the Republic to the Bourbons, since he felt that the Republic was near to its end, and he could not expect to derive from it any further profit. Fauche received encouraging letters from Paris, saying: "All goes well," or, "There will soon be good news." To await this "good news" he went to Frankfort, and there, to his bewildered amazement, he learned, from the newspapers, of the fall of the Directoire. A new power had arisen; Barras had fallen, and with him had perished Fauche-Borel's conspiracy, and he, for the second time, on the very eve of success, saw his diplomacy unseated by the leaps and bounds of French politics.

This great event, as we know, was echoed like a thunderclap throughout all Europe; the Revolution was over; and the Powers which had armed themselves against France were resigning themselves to dealing with the new Consul. Fauche-Borel, however, was still in arms; and in the spring of the year 1800 he departed for England, "with the intention of enlightening his Britannic Majesty's Ministers."* The said Ministers, doubtless to rid themselves of this inconvenient visionary, commissioned him to bear a dispatch

* *Mémoires*, ii., 345.

to Wickham, then in the neighbourhood of Vienna. Fauche thereupon drove across Europe, travelling from one posting-house to another, passing for a person of consequence, happy merely to live, to drive on and on without a halt, except to change horses or to pass the night, and then he stayed only at the best hotels. He loved this continual movement, which flattered his illusions and his dreams; he loved passing through the little country towns, to the admiration of the worthy townsfolk, who from their thresholds enjoyed a passing glimpse of this distinguished traveller, who sat well buttressed by his cushions, full of airs and graces, with his beaming face and large prominent eyes, while the postillion, with his horn to his lips sounded a flourish, and the post-master, cap in hand, hastened to wait upon "His Excellency." Travelling thus, in less than a year he went from Vienna to Wesel and thence to Hamburg, whence, returning by way of London, he crossed half Europe to Baireuth, returned to Frankfort, and at last, in the summer of 1801, for the first time in four years, he returned to Neuchâtel, to his own house, his wife, and his children.

His purse was well filled, for during his stay at home he bought for 500 louis a piece of ground,* just outside the city, in a highly advantageous position, in the neighbourhood known as *le Vieux Chatel*, and there he straightway began to build a country house. But it was predestined that politics should absorb his whole life, and the foundations of the intended building were hardly rising above the soil when Fauche received a letter from the Government then in power, requesting his presence in London at the earliest possible moment. Europe—though now at peace for the first time in ten years—had need of his help: he set out† for England,

* According to the records of the State of Neuchâtel this purchase was not effected until November, 1802. Now at this date, as we shall see, Fauche was far distant from his native city. According to his *Mémoires* he bought the land and began to build on it during the summer of 1801.

† The documents marked F^7 6319A in the *Archives nationales* include the following passport: "We, the four magistrates in the city of Neuchâtel in Switzerland, beg and request all Governors of

by way of France, travelling through Paris, although he knew that the police of the Consulate had their eyes on him, reached Calais unmolested, and arrived in London. There he learned that the English Cabinet wished to entrust him with a highly confidential mission, the success of which could only be guaranteed by abilities unparalleled. Although the British Government had formerly made peace with the French Republic, it had not abandoned all hope of replacing the Bourbons on the throne; it wished to overthrow Bonaparte, and, in order to obtain this result it intended to oppose to his prestige, which was increasing from day to day, that of two men whose names were still popular and who were regarded with affection by the army: Pichegru and Moreau. Pichegru, who had escaped by a miracle from exile in Cayenne, was then in London; he had consented to a reconciliation with Moreau, and it was he who had recommended the Ministers of George III. to employ Fauche-Borel as the only man capable of bringing about the desired reconciliation. Fauche accordingly left for Paris in order to sound the victor of Hohenlinden with regard to his intentions. Such is his own version of the story; which is probably the truth somewhat embellished.

What is certain is that he left London on June 5, 1802, and, whether he was heedless to the point of temerity or whether his love of lucrative intrigue had blinded him to all measures of prudence, the fact remains that six days later he was established in Paris, where his name and his description had been known to the police of all ranks for nearly five years. It is quite possible that, like many of his contemporaries, he found a certain excitement in the romantic and dangerous existence of the conspirator,

---

cities to allow M. Louis Fauche, citizen of the aforesaid city, merchant, thirty-nine years of age, in height 5 feet 4 inches, hair and eyebrows chestnut brown, eyes deep grey, with a cleft in the chin, large mouth, and a full face, who is going to Geneva for reasons of business, to enter and leave cities under their jurisdiction. September 28, 1801." This must be the date on which Fauche left Neuchâtel.

compelled to lead a double life, a life of dissimulation and incessant pretences, a perpetual conflict, fought with weapons of craft and cunning, against the spies who abounded in the Paris of those days—a Paris so well suited to these clandestine lives; a city of narrow winding streets, blocked by a swarming population; a city of houses with private exits, of unexpected short cuts, of dark corners and long alleys with many outlets; a city whose people moved in darkness after nightfall, since the few lanterns that guided the pedestrian shed no light on the streets. At twenty paces from his own house the Parisian was a stranger; in every quarter of the city lodgings could be had provided with hiding-places, trap-doors, revolving cupboards, chimneys containing ladders, and wardrobes of melodramatic qualities, which were secretly and skilfully constructed by a church-warden of the parish of Saint-Laurent, Spin by name.* Fauche-Borel was living in the Hôtel des Bons Enfants, situated in the street of the same name; he reckoned that his Swiss nationality and his apparent profession, which was that of a quiet bookseller, who was visiting Paris for business reasons, would have saved him from molestation on the part of the police, forgetting that his double life was well known, for he was already notorious as an incorrigible, as a fisher in troubled waters, "who had always a scheme for some conspiracy in one pocket, and a manuscript for publication in the other." On this occasion the avowed object of his journey was "to renew his acquaintance with his colleagues in Paris," and he had also brought with him some unpublished writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau—the very same which had already served for his interviews with Pichegru at Blotzheim, and which now, immediately on his arrival in Paris, had been accepted by Bossange, Masson, and Besson, publishers, No. 6, Rue de Tournon.

In the same house dwelt another publisher, one Charles-Frédéric Perlet, with whom, although he denies it, Fauche must have become acquainted, for in him he found a com-

* *Procès de Moreau et autres*, and also *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6405.

patriot, Perlet having been born in Geneva,* had long made his home there and had married there.† Having become a widower, he set up in Paris as a printer, and there, in November, 1790, he published a *Journal* which attained great popularity and prosperity.‡ Although it bore the title of *Le Journal de Perlet*, Perlet scarcely ever wrote for it: he passed for a man of little education, and was even said "to possess no capacity of any kind whatever,"§ which, as we shall see, was a mistaken estimate. . . . Moreover, Perlet must have inspired Fauche-Borel with confidence, for he was a sound Royalist, and was given to boasting that he had contributed, in 1795, by means of an article which had enjoyed considerable fame, to the liberation of Mme. Royale, the daughter of Louis XVIII. Included in the proscriptions of Fructidor, banished to Cayenne, and recalled from exile at the beginning of the Consulate, he returned to Europe in a somewhat dramatic fashion. The vessel in which he was returning was wrecked upon the coast of Scotland; Perlet,‖ cast ashore, was given shelter by fisherfolk, and sent to

* January 26, 1769, the son of Abraham Perlet, of Geneva, and the son of Charlotte Gignoux of Niyon (*Archives of the State of Geneva*).

† January 9, 1779, to Marthe-Elisabeth Quiby, daughter of Claude Quiby (*Archives of the State of Geneva*).

‡ The original title of this journal was, "*Assemblée nationale et Commune de Paris ou Rapport très exact des Séances.* . . From the beginning of the year 1791 it bore Perlet's imprint, and after the 9 Thermidor, year II., the title became *Le Journal de Perlet*" (Tourneux, *Bibliographies*, ii., 10283 to 10290. We find in *l'Almanach Royal pour* 1792 (p. 309): "Monsieur Perlet, printer to the Court of Cassation, Rue Saint-André-des-Arts, Hôtel de Châteauvieux."

§ *Biographie nouvelle des Contemporains*, Arnault, Jay, etc., 1824.

‖ "Job Aimé, Perlet, Parisot, Barraudeau, and Berthollon, together with the wife and daughter of the last named, who were returning to Europe in the *Phaéton*, Captain Gardner, from Cayenne, whither they had been deported by order of the Directoire, were wrecked on the coast of Aberdeenshire; but the wreck being detected in good time, they were got ashore and welcomed with the greatest hospitality. Monsieur Parisot, Mme. Berthollon and her daughter have since died of the results of this shipwreck; the others are at present in Edinburgh, where they are waiting for passports in order to proceed to London. This news is given by the English newspapers" (*Gazette de France*, March 12, 1800).

Edinburgh. He spent some time in England and visited Germany before returning to Paris, where he had settled some two years before Fauche-Borel's advent, in the very house which Fauche frequented in the summer of 1802 on the pretext of printing his unpublished MS. of Rousseau. Perlet married a second wife, the sister of the writer Fiévée, and endeavoured to repeat his former success; but, ruined by proscription, without credit and without talent, he vegetated, advancing propositions that were vaguely connected with literature, and found himself reduced to all manner of shifts and expedients. He was then a man of forty-three, tall and strongly built, with brown eyes, bearing on his face "four peculiar marks," dangerously conspicuous for a sometime exile whose dealings with the police were not yet over: two on the left side of the mouth, another above the nose near the left eye, and a small pit in the middle of the chin.* After some days in the Rue des Bons Enfants Fauche decided that it might be prudent to settle in a less densely populated quarter of the city. He confided this desire to Mme. Masson, the wife of his publisher, and she found for him an inconspicuous lodging in the Rue Saint-Hyacinthe,† not far from the Place Saint-Michele.‡ He carried thither the most important of his papers, and began the negotiations with which the British Cabinet had entrusted him; he saw Moreau, in a pretty house which the latter then occupied at Chaillot, in the Rue de Saint-Pierre,§ and spoke to him, with his usual profuseness, of Pichegru, of the Royalist party, and of the coming Restoration of the Monarchy. A "brother," travelling in corruption, and a "pedlar of consciences," he showed the General the pro-

* Description: Jail-entries, the Temple, *Archives de la Préfecture de Police*, A.B. 327.

† To-day replaced by the Rue Malebranche.

‡ To-day the Carrefour Médicis.

§ Fauche-Borel (*Mémoires*, iii., 15) states that Moreau was living in the Petite Rue Saint-Pierre. This is a mistake. The Petite Rue Saint-Pierre was in the neighbourhood of the Bastille; it has been absorbed by the present Rue Saint-Sabin. The Rue Saint-Pierre, at Chaillot, for that matter, was merely a narrow alley, the site of which is to-day occupied by the Musée Galliera.

missory letters patent drafted by Louis XVIII. with an eye to Barras, and had never been used; he willingly extracted them from his pocket, as well as an autograph letter of the King's, which he carried about with him as a sort of honourable reference. Moreau refused to be tempted; according to Fauche he delivered a long speech, but it looks as though the bookseller must have been coldly shown the door, for he did not risk a second call. He was more fortunate in respect of a fervent Royalist, none other than that Abbé Leclerc afflicted with a wall eye, whom we saw in January, 1797, saving, at the peril of his life, the documents and the crosses of Saint-Louis of the Brotier agency. The Abbé was living under the *alias* of Boisvalon, in the house in the Rue du Pot-de-Fer; Fauche found him very well informed as regards all that was happening in France, and fully determined to resume his adventurous life as soon as occasion should offer. For nearly a fortnight the Swiss bookseller had been running to and fro in this fashion, furthering both his business affairs and his conspiracy simultaneously, and on July 7,* as, on leaving the house of his publishers, Bossange and Masson, he turned down the Rue de Tournon in order to reach the Rue du Petit-Lion,† two men ran up behind him, pushed him into a *fiacre* and took him to the Prefecture of Police. That same night he entered the prison of the Temple, his entry being duly recorded in the jailor's book, and was hidden away in great secrecy behind the iron doors of the tragic Tower.

* Fauche gives July 1 as the date of his arrest. The prison register gives the 18 Messidor, year X. (July 7, 1802) as the date of his entry into the Temple.

† Part of the present Rue Saint-Sulpice, lying between the Rue de Tournon and the Rue de Condé.

CHAPTER III

STATE PRISON

WITHOUT pretending that Fauche was pleased to find himself in prison, it is plain to see that he accepted the accident with a philosophic mind. His incarceration emphasised in a striking fashion the importance of the service which he had rendered to the Royalist cause, and we need not read between the lines of his abundant memoirs or the letters still remaining in the State records, to realise how secretly flattered he was to reflect that he was among the prisoners of that already legendary Tower of the Temple, a prison reserved for captives of distinction, where the more zealous champions of the Monarchy were fated to make a longer or shorter stay. The imprisonment of the Royal Family had made this prison famous, and from that period, if we accept a few names of obscure Anarchists, long since forgotten, the jailer's register is almost like a Peerage of France; and in order to load its stauncher upholders with favours, the approaching Restoration needed only to dip into this list of the persecuted faithful.

Accordingly, Fauche accepted imprisonment with patience. During the first month of his imprisonment, passed in secret and solitary confinement, he suffered from lack of air and exercise in the narrow casement in which he lay confined; apart from the warders whose business it was to bring him his food, he saw no one whomsoever all day long, and received no callers other than the bats of which the old Tower was full; but when the ordeal of these first days was over, as soon as he was permitted to the ordinary life of the prison, he found imprisonment quite endurable. The fact is that in those days the Temple did not correspond in any respect whatsoever with one's usual

conception of a prison; the doorkeeper was its absolute master, at one and the same time director, housekeeper, head-jailor, and governor; and provided that he represented, on the occasion of all levies for the army, the boarders sent him by the Chief Justice or the Prefecture of Police, within his own jurisdiction he made the laws to suit himself, revised the prison regulations in the sense most convenient to himself, and treated his prisoners as comrades, as they appealed to his temperament or his sympathies. Now, the doorkeeper of the Temple in 1802 was the most genial, the most jovial, the most obliging and least vexatious person imaginable. His name was Louis-François Fauconnier, his age was fifty years, and he had a wife and five children.* It is impossible to guess how he obtained promotion and the enviable position which he held. In a report he asserted "that he had served the Revolution with his person and his whole fortune."† He was sturdily built, with an aquiline nose, and brown hair receding from the forehead;‡ a man of genial habit, he was fairly well educated, expressed himself well, loved a good laugh, and was easy to get on with, provided that one asked of him nothing that might risk the loss of his position. He had been in charge of the Temple for four years, and was given to congratulating himself for introducing certain welcome modifications in the prison rules. At seven o'clock in the morning the warders opened the doors of the cells, and the prisoners were free to walk to and fro as they chose in the courtyards of the prison until ten or eleven o'clock at night, according to the time of the year. Visitors from outside were permitted to enter the Temple at any hour of the day or night, to partake of the prisoners' meals, to enter their rooms and remain there; so that the sinister Tower, whose compulsory inmates had no lack of money, assumed, on certain days, the appearance of a fashionable hotel, whose guests from top to bottom were feasting and making merry. Fauconnier made no secret

* *Archives nationales*, F⁷ 6185A. † *Ibid.*, F⁷ 6185A.

‡ Jail deliveries at the Temple, *Archives de la Préfecture du Police.*

of his preference for those inmates who, being lovers of good cheer, did not forget to invite him to dinner; but he warned them also to be prudent, as he could not be sure of all the prisoners, and it was always possible that there were spies among them—"sheep," in the slang of the prisoners. "You must say nothing before me that cannot be repeated to the police, for if I did not report what you say, others would take it upon themselves to do so, and I should lose my position."* So much liberty of action was granted to the prisoners that one of them turned a cell into an oratory and there administered the Holy Sacrament.†

As soon as Fauche was liberated from secret confinement, Fauconnier himself introduced him to the other prisoners; the bookseller, agreeably flattered by the attentions of his distinguished fellow-prisoners, derived great satisfaction from these introductions, and during his stay in the Temple he furthered his acquaintance with a number of gentlemen whose names rolled proudly from his tongue: the Duc de Bouillon, Prince Pignatelli, the Marquis de Puyvert, the Marquis de Rouzière, Comtes de Valmorel and de Frotté, Baron de La Rochefoucauld, Chevaliers de Vaudricourt, de Mezières, de Velcourt; and an extremely rich Englishman, Lord Camelfort, brother-in-law of Lord Grenville, without speaking of other persons so notable that he will never cease

* Fauconnier's pay was 3,000 francs plus an indemnity of 1,200 francs; but as he supplied the prisoners with such food as they chose to order—of course, at their expense—and as many of them never gave a thought to their expenditure, the position of *concierge* must have been extremely profitable; but even so, one can hardly form any idea of what the management of this prison may have meant. The number of prisoners on an average was not less than forty or fifty, and sometimes very much greater; and each of them appears, if we are to believe the contemporary *Mémoires*, to have dined in private and ordered such food as he preferred. Witness the Reverend Father de Closrivière, who writes: "I eat my dinner with Monsieur de la Rouzière. . . . The restaurant-keeper feeds us very well at tenpence a head." Fauconnier had recourse to the restaurant-keepers of the neighbourhood, but this involved a running to and fro of waiters which must have made strict supervision the merest illusion.

† *Le R. P. de Closrivière*, by the R. P. Terrien.

to boast that he shared their captivity. The freedom of such delightful society uplifted him in his own estimation, and enabled him to enjoy his stay in prison; the more so as he does not seem to have been materially embarrassed. He had money; he seems even to have had a great deal of money.* Moreover, he received visits from the outer world. The reader may remember the two children of his brother-in-law, Vitel; we saw them mourning their father, executed in Geneva, during the Terror. The elder, Edouard, had now reached his twenty-third year; he was living in Paris, where he conducted a small business as a bookseller's agent and distributor, in the Rue des Saints-Pères. And every day, indeed, often twice a day, he came to the Temple to chat with his Uncle Fauche, and to take charge of his correspondence with the outer world, for in this well-mannered prison visitors were not searched. Fauche-Borel saw also, frequently, a relation of his, a cousin or aunt, a native of Neuchâtel, now living in Paris, where she had married a cavalry officer, an Alsatian, of the name of Scholl. The obliging doorkeeper, full of solicitude for his literary guest, offered to instal in his own quarters a little store of books for which his son would find customers in Paris. Fauche eagerly agreed to this arrangement, which offered him the advantage of carrying on his business, and above all of interesting the doorkeeper† in it, and with the delightful assurance habitual with him, he regarded this arrangement as such a promise of security that we find him, in the Temple itself, conspiring anew and undertaking a commission with

* "A number of *émigrés*," he tells us, "to whom I had lent money at Neuchâtel, hastened to pay their debts as soon as they had heard of my imprisonment." But this is not enough to explain the luxurious style in which he lived in the Temple.

† This speculation was not successful; it began with the loss of 750 copies of the *Considérations sur la France*, a work by Maistre, which was confiscated by the police: "July 19, 1803. There were seized at the frontier two packets of books sent by the publishing-house of Fauche-Borel, prisoner in the Temple, to the booksellers Giguet and Michaud, Rue des Bons-Enfants. These packets contained a number of copies of the *Journal de Clèry* and *Considérations sur la France*" (Aulard, *Paris sous le Consulat*, iv., 252).

which the British Cabinet had entrusted him. He wrote to Moreau, who, for that matter, persisted in his failure to reply; he sent his nephew, Edouard Vitel, to call upon the General at the Château de Grosbois, and also on the Abbé Pichegru, the brother of the outlaw; he even corresponded with England through the agency of Lord Camelford, his fellow-prisoner—indeed, it is doubtful whether there was ever a political prisoner who conspired so audaciously against the authority that was holding him captive.*

For the rest, all this seems somewhat suspicious; and, indeed, the police were by no means ignorant of the reckless and perfidious task with which the Swiss bookseller was employing the leisure hours of his imprisonment; they knew, though he had no suspicion of thè fact, the object of his visit to France, and the reconciliation of Pichegru and Moreau, which he had undertaken to bring about, was not of a kind to embarrass the First Consul. Bonaparte, anxious to be rid of his two illustrious rivals, was perfectly willing to see them destroy their popularity by compromising themselves with Fauche-Borel as go-between; and it is quite possible that while the prisoner was flattering himself on the score of his astuteness, he was unconsciously furthering the plans of the man whom he was seeking to oppose. Fauriel, who was well-informed, although he no longer belonged to the police at the moment when Fauche was playing the strange part of unconscious *agent provacateur*—Fauriel, who was certainly not lacking in shrewdness, seems to have seen through the complications of this intrigue. In persecuting Moreau with his propositions, "Fauche-Borel," he writes, "could do nothing save by the authority of the very power that was holding him prisoner";† and a footnote to his manuscript completes his diagnosis: "I believe he was acting in good faith." And he was; all his life long Fauche, so infatuated with his diplomatic talents, was to be "in good faith" the plaything and the

* Fauche-Borel, *Mémoires*, 36-66, *passim*.

† *Les Derniers Jours du Consulat*, an unpublished manuscript of Fauriel's, published and annotated by Frédéric Lalanne, 154, 155.

dupe of his opponents, and if there is any need of an explanation of his stay in the Temple, the explanation is that the Consular police kept him there—under observation, one might almost say—studying this phenomenal example of vanity and clumsiness, with a view to the profit which it would sooner or later derive from so much presumption, incompetence, and credulity.

It came to pass that, after eighteen months of endurable captivity, foreseeing that political events were about to come to a crisis, and that Bonaparte, if no obstacle were placed in his way, would usurp the French throne, Fauche-Borel felt that he was the only man capable of opposing so audacious a project; he must go to England at the earliest possible moment, in order to warn the European monarchists, and to dictate to them a plan of campaign. He determined, therefore, to escape from the Temple, and it must be admitted that he managed this difficult enterprise in quite an ingenious fashion. Edouard Vitel, who, as we have seen, used to visit the Temple twice a day, and was therefore quite familiar to the gate-keepers, commissioned a modeller to make a waxen mask in his own likeness, while Fauche, on his part, expressed a desire to celebrate by a little feast the 1st of January of the year 1804; and he invited to this feast, in addition to a few of his fellow-prisoners, and two or three friends from outside, the jailer Fauconnier, whom he had often invited to his table, and who had always enjoyed himself there. Fauche lured him on by the prospect of a tremendous feast with wines of good vintage, champagne at discretion, and choice liqueurs.

While the appointed day was yet young, he drew from his private reserve certain venerable bottles, which he gave as New Year gifts to the gate-keepers and the warders. He was careful to keep them well supplied with drink all through the day, in order to keep them in a favourable frame of mind. Evening came and the invited guests arrived; amongst others Edouard Vitel, carrying the waxen mask under his ample cloak, and, on the pretext of a raging toothache, wearing round his jaws a bandage that concealed

half his face. The gate-keepers, sympathising with the young man's ill luck, showed him into the room where the table was laid: it was a small room, on the first floor of the record office.

The guests took their places round the table: they ate and drank heartily, excepting the unfortunate Vitel, whose sufferings prevented him from taking part in the general merriment. About nine o'clock, when the coffee was brought in, the host rose from the table in order to go to his room, and to bring thence a bottle of his choice *crème de Barbades*, of which Fauconnier was particularly fond. On passing through the corridor, the bookseller threw over his back young Vitel's cape, clapped upon his face the mask reproducing his nephew's features, pulled down his hat over his waxen nose, and, holding his handkerchief pressed against his cheek in order to conceal the compromising immobility of the artificial face, he hastily ran downstairs, passing the gatekeeper, who was sleeping off the effects of his wine, and crossing the courtyard he came to the porter's lodge; and the porter, occupied like the rest in celebrating the *ci-devant* 1st of January, asked him, taking him for Vitel, "How his swollen face was getting on?" Fauche replied by groaning as though in pain. The cord was pulled, the gates were set ajar; the bookseller opened them and shut them behind him, and found himself in the open street.* While breaking up and scattering at random the mask to which he owed his liberty, he set off in the direction of the Rue Saint-Lazare, where his relative Scholl was living—the cavalry officer whose name has already been mentioned. Fauche knew that he could lie hidden there while awaiting a favourable moment for his journey to England. Scholl, indeed, was expecting him, and celebrated his escape by a feast, and gave him a cordial welcome. Fauche was intoxicated with delight; the only shadow upon his happiness was his remorse in that he had left Edouard Vitel in

* The register or book of jail deliveries contains this comment: "Fauche-Borel . . . a prisoner whose description is given in the, opposite column, escaped on 10 Nivôse, year XII.=January 1, 1804, in disguise."

the hands of his jailer, and his anxiety to learn how the latter would treat the hoax so cleverly carried out by his prisoner.

Fauconnier waited, patiently at first, drinking the last drops from the bottles before him, for Fauche-Borel to bring the precious flask of liqueur; then, as he waited for him in vain, he went to look for him, and Vitel took advantage of his absence to decamp. His plans succeeded without a hitch; only one of the gatekeepers—and he was half drunk—expressed some surprise: "But haven't you gone out already, Monsieur Vitel ?"—"Yes, but didn't you see me return ?" He passed through the gates, mingled with a group of a number of persons who had come to the Temple to celebrate the New Year with the prisoners, reached the Rue Saint-Moiselle almost simultaneously with his uncle, and returned to his own lodgings in the Rue des Saints-Pères; he resumed his customary habits and proceeded to carry on his business as usual; but in the evening, as he was about to re-enter his lodgings, he saw Fauconnier appear, accompanied by a commissary and a dozen policemen; by them he was escorted to the Prefecture and pestered with questions,* and as he refused to reveal his uncle's hiding-place, he returned to the Temple that self-same night: though on this occasion not as a visitor but as a captive.† Almost at the same time Fauche-Borel, likewise, surrounded by gendarmes, re-entered the gates of his prison.‡ He had been arrested

* He was even treated to a certain amount of torture. The examining magistrates of those days made extensive use of thumb-screws, and we may accept the truth of Vitel's statement when he informs us that he was subjected to this torture.

† "Vitel, Édouard, native of Verrières, in Switzerland, county of Neuchâtel, commercial traveller domiciled in Paris, Rue des Cinq (*sic*) Pères, Faubourg Saint-Germain, No. 1222, entered 11 Nivôse, year III.=January 2, 1804. Height 1 m. 71, hair and eyebrows deep chestnut, eyes grey and rather large, the nose long, thick, aquiline, hooked at the tip, the mouth small, the lips rather thick, the chin long and rounded, the face oval in shape, the cheeks hollow, and the forehead ordinary" (Records of the Préfecture of Police, *Écrou du Temple*, iii., p. 570).

‡ "8 Nivôse, year XII.=December 30, 1803. One Fauche-Borel of Neuchâtel, escaped yesterday from the residential part of the Temple where he was a prisoner, wearing the clothes of his

just as he had written, in Scholl's house, a letter to his wife, in which he stated that he would shortly arrive at Neuchâtel —a return to the sheepfold which was, as a matter of fact, quite incompatible with his actual intentions; and in this letter he had slipped a brief note which he begged Mme. Fauche to post immediately, and which was intended to amuse his friend Fauconnier. In this note he excused himself, in bantering terms, of having left the jailer in a somewhat precipitous fashion; " but his friend was a husband and a father, and would certainly sympathise with the joy which Fauche-Borel would experience in returning to his wife and children." Such was the theme of his bantering letter; it caused great amusement in the Temple—but not to Fauche-Borel—when, a fortnight later, the chaffing letter of the recaptured fugitive, when a fortnight or more had elapsed since his recapture, reached his friend Fauconnier, having been forwarded from Neuchâtel. The situation of the poor bookseller was not an enviable one;* his sometime friend, Montgaillard, who had sold himself to the Government in power, denounced him with diabolical persistence, and warned the police that in Fauche they had under lock and key one of the most incorrigible agents of the Bourbon Princes. These events took place early in that year of 1804, which should stand out of all other years in the annals of the Tower of the Temple, already so burdened with tragedy.

---

nephew, who had called to see him. He was detected and arrested to-day by the citizen Pasques, Inspector of the Ministry, in the house, in the Rue Saint-Lazare, in which he was living in hiding " (Aulard, *Paris sous le Consulat*, iv., 604). We are not told how his escape, which took place January 1, 1804, as is stated in the jailer's register, could have been recorded by a police official as early as December 30, 1803.

* In Germinal Montgaillard published, as a sort of indictment of Pichegru, a pamphlet, in the course of which, after giving a detailed account of Fauche-Borel's interviews with Pichegru, at Blotzheim, he stated, in a note: " We now learn that Fauche-Borel is in the Temple." This was equivalent to pushing the bookseller on to the scaffold. (See *Mémoire concernant la trahison de Pichegru dans les années, III., IV. et V., réligé en l'an VI. par M. R. de Montgaillard et dont l'original se trouve aux archives du Government*, p. 9, note.)

It was a year of tragic days, of anguished nights, when it seemed natural to expect the terrible. One morning a lugubrious cry echoed through the silence of the prison cells: "Help! A knife! A knife!" One of the prisoners, Bouvet de Lozier, said to be an agent of Louis XVIII., had just hanged himself: but the silken neck-cloth which served as noose was severed in time, and Fauconnier restored him to life. Still gasping for breath, on being questioned he revealed a vast conspiracy, whose ringleaders were the proscribed princes, with Moreau, Pichegru, and Cadoudal, their object being the kidnapping or assassination of the First Consul. And during the following days Fauche-Borel saw the gates of the Temple opened to all those whom the half-dead man had denounced: first Moreau, calm and resigned; then Pichegru, whom he saw crossing the court-yard dressed in a blue frockcoat, limping heavily, his left hand enveloped in a white handkerchief; George Cadoudal, the terrible Breton, a thick-set Colossus, agile and impressive despite his obesity; him Fauche beheld through his keyhole, lying on his bed, with his hands bound before him, and watched by two gendarmes. The Temple was soon crowded; more than a hundred prisoners were packed together in the four storeys of the Tower. There were men there of every sort: peasants from Morbihan, officers of the British Navy, French gentlemen, Norman fishermen, *ci-devant* great nobles, generals, men of the people, and even two children of nine or ten years, cabin-boys, members of the crew of Captain Wright, and captured with him, who drew with charcoal, on the walls of the courtyard, gallows from which Bonaparte hung suspended; Cadoudal's companions-in-arms used to gather together under the trees to recite their rosary or to sing hymns; others played games, most of them carelessly, resigned to death, but fearing the "examinations," from which some returned with fingers mutilated by the thumbscrews of the police.

One saw, too, amidst this heterogeneous population a priest, a man of seventy years or more, whose sanctity, serenity, and kindliness had conquered the most hostile: it

was Father Picot, Picot de Closrivière. Just as he had gone through the Revolution seeking for crimes to absolve and sufferings to assuage, so he now mingled with the turbulent crowd of prisoners, speaking to all of pardon and of hope. He had been imprisoned because he had received too many confessions and knew too much; the police had hinted to this "old madman" that he might win his liberty in exchange for certain confidential information; he did not even understand them, but thought himself fortunate to be there, hearts in need of strength and courage and unbelievers to be convinced. Fauche-Borel never imagined that there were pious women in Paris, who, at the request of his fellow-companion in captivity, addressed their prayers to heaven in order to obtain his conversion to Catholicism.*

And then one April morning the whole prison was in an uproar. The doorkeepers hurried up in consternation; Fauconnier was bullying his men; an atmosphere of terror filled the Tower, though as yet no one knew what fresh tragedy was to be recorded to swell the number of those which had been played in the ancient keep. Judges came, in their robes, and officers of the army; last of all came a bier on which a dead body lay outstretched: it was that of Pichegru, which was being taken to the Palais de Justice at the close of a solemn autopsy.† Fauche, who was more than commonly impressed by this unexpected death, obtained speech with the warders, asking questions, collating facts,

* There were in the Temple at this time two Protestants, Fauche-Borel and his fellow-countryman, Christin, whose biography has been written by M. F. Barbey. See also *Le Contemporain*, January 1878. Christin was converted by Father Picot. As for Fauche-Borel, in his *Mémoires*, iii., 32, he speaks of the "excellent Father Picault." The Father wrote to Mademoiselle de Cicé: "Do yourself recite, and ask your good friends to do the same ,a Novena in honour of our Lady of Mercy. . . . The purpose of this Novena is the conversion of a Calvinist, a man interesting in himself and because of his occupation he appears to be very well disposed." Father Picot's biographer appears to take it for granted, although he does not actually say so, that Fauche-Borel was the Calvinist in question (*Le R. P. de Closrivière*, by the R. P. Terrien).

† *La Mort de Pichegru*, by Fred. Barbey.

seeking to prove that his neighbour had not committed suicide, as was supposed, but was murdered: and not for a moment did he feel any remorse in connection with this lamentable ending. If the conqueror of Holland, whose tarnished fame had filled him with despair, died wretchedly in the *oubliette* of this accursed Tower, it was because his downfall had its origin in that meeting in an Alsatian village, where with impunity someone for the first time incited him to turn traitor to his duty. There he was pursued with offers of millions, of castles in Spain; there he was promised the gratitude of the world, and persuaded that honour itself would require him to desert his cause, and intoxicated with veracious phrases and flattering illusions. And all this was to end in a disgraceful and voluntary death and a secret burial.

The forty-five prisoners accused in the great trial which began in May left the Temple for the Conciergerie; sentence was pronounced on June 9; twenty-one were acquitted; nineteen were sentenced to death; in the case of seven of these last their penalty was commuted, and they, with the remaining five, who were condemned to two years' imprisonment, were destined to be shifted from prison to prison until the fall of the Empire, so recently established.* As for Fauche-Borel, whether it was that Pichegru's suicide made his appearance useless, or whether it was that the police thought it wiser to humour this pretentious chatterbox, they had him out of the Temple and sent him to the prison of La Force, where he was surrounded by prisoners in common law. La Force was a sordid and infamous sewer, but the transfer wounded the bookseller's pride rather than diminished his comfort; and it was on this, precisely, that the police were counting.†

The Consular police, although for nearly two years could not have been under Fouché's authority, still retained the position of the powerful organisation with which he had

* May 18, 1804.

† Fauche-Borel's transfer to La Force is dated June 12, 1804 (Jailers' register, Temple).

equipped it while still at the head of the service. It still employed his methods, his procedures; moreover, it is stated that even during his interregnum he exercised over this important service the occult authority of a creator.* The two eminent assistants whom he selected for his Ministry, and whom he retained for the whole duration of his second administration—Réal and Desmarest—were trained in his school and drew inspiration from his teaching. They were both men of whom one may say, as men used to say of the "famous cardinal," that they did too much good for men to say evil of them, and too much evil for men to speak well of them. Like Fouché himself, like all those who dispose of the life and liberty of their contemporaries, they have had furious detractors and fervent apologists. Réal, who, in the opinion of some, possessed "regular features, although his expression charmed one, by the lucid transparent gaze of his blue eyes,"† had, according to others, "the head of a tiger-cat, never to fade from the memory when one had once seen it."‡ All are agreed that he was a man of unparalleled wit and shrewdness; he was "the complete policeman, from head to foot."§ According to Pasquier, who knew him well, "he was not really so bad-hearted as one might be tempted to imagine, owing to a sort of joviality which never left him, even in the execution of the most brutal measures. . . . He was accustomed to cross-examine prisoners in a harsh and ironical tone, which was really quite improper. . . ."‖ "But he sometimes gave evidence of generous opinions expressed with genuine feeling."¶ Until Fouché returned to power he was the Director of the police under the authority of the Chief

* Fouché was Minister of Police from 2 Thermidor, year VII. =July 20, 1799, to September 15, 1802, at which date the Ministry was suppressed. When it was re-established on June 11, 1804, Fouché resumed duty until June 3, 1810.

† Nodier, *Souvenirs de la Révolution*, ii., 264.

‡ D'Allonville, *Mémoires secrets*, iv., 66.

§ *Histoire secrète du Directoire*, iv., 332.

‖ Pasquier, *Mémoires*, i., 268, ii., 33.

¶ *Idem.*

Justice.* Desmarest, his subordinate, chief of the Division of Public Safety and of the Secret Police, an unfrocked priest, formerly a turbulent Jacobin, was a skilful man of business, and, to tell the truth, somewhat out of his class, "intelligent, prudent, and able."† An orderly and upright person, he possessed, according to Sainte-Beuve,‡ "that gravity, that discretion, that are the mark of the honest man." Unless, as others assure us, he was indeed "a stranger to all the finer feelings . . . who never shrank from any degree of treachery, employing his profound and criminal abilities in instigating the most odious measures."§ It is true that habit had made him, if not pitiless, at least insensible; he excelled in the examination of prisoners, deceiving the unfortunates who fell into his hands by a genial, almost a friendly manner, "making them lose their bearings, driving them back, baffling them by insidious questions,"‖ serving them up to the judges, beautifully "cooked," and, at the same time, persuaded that they had found in him an advocate and even a defender. Fauche-Borel himself was to fall into this trap.

Réal and—especially—Desmarest were in command, during the whole of the Empire, of the "perfidious and motley"¶ army of the secret police. Some thousand portfolios bear witness to their far-sighted activities; there is enough here to provide the historians, for centuries, with a singular variety of subjects: tragedies, sometimes hideous enough, in which the boards are trodden by hateful spies, simpletons cleverly snared, implacable magistrates, and cunning and adventurous women. Political disputes grow from a pesti-

* Under Fouché's second administration Desmarest was Director of arrondissement, comprising the departments of the east, the north, and the west.

† Madelin, *Fouché*, i., 468.

‡ *Le Globe*, April 20, 1833, quoted by A. Savine in the preface to *Quinze Ans de haute Police.*

§ Forneron, *Histoire des Émigrés*, ii., 237 et Bire, quoted by Savine, *loc. cit.*

‖ Madelin, *Fouché*, i., 498.

¶ *Idem.*

lent soil. We cannot deny that the guillotine and the firing squad are too often the last chapter of Réal's humorous cross-examinations and Desmarest's tentacular enquiries; but, in obedience to Fouché's precept, they remained impartial; they did not desire "the death of the sinner"; for them the all-important thing was to be "instructed." If some Chouan were rounded up for them, some emissary of one of those Royalist agencies whose workings I have endeavoured briefly to explain, they gave the man no peace until they had confessed him, emptied him of all possible knowledge, and if the poor fellow, bewildered, allured, terrified, and distracted by promises and threats, still resisted and refused to surrender his secrets, he was left "in pickle" in a dungeon, lost to the world, believing himself forgotten, until the day when, unable to hold out any longer, he consented to betray his friends. Like that enriched dustman who, lest his sons should blush at his sometime profession, required them, before he would leave them his property, to plunge to the neck into a barrel filled with mud, Réal and Desmarest forced their patient to take a "police bath" and to undergo a test of fidelity; this gave them a permanent hold over the unfortunate man, since the proofs of his compulsory felony were carefully preserved amongst the documents relating to his case, and they were likewise able to discredit him at will in the eyes of his party. Many of their prisoners, and among them some of the noblest and even the bravest, who would courageously have suffered physical torture without a word, were unable, without weakening, to endure this moral torture. Names that are the glory of French history thus became the names of traitors; it is only fair to pass them over and to mention only the more obscure: Bayard, Wickham's courier—once the tutor of the Ducs d'Angoulême and de Berry—and François, whose names have already figured in this narrative, thus exchanged the service of the Bourbons for that of Fouché; Dubouchet, the head of a Royalist agency in the south of France, where he earned the nickname of "the Cadoudal of the Midi," was enrolled amidst Desmarest's

spies;* Alphonse de Beauchamp, a derelict noble, also became one of the cogwheels of this terrible machine, while others, like Rivoire or Vernègues, a deserter from the Royalist camp, acted as prison spies for Réal;† while the pure and chivalrous Carlos Sourdat, once the agent for Brotier and La Villeurnoy, who was forced to turn his coat by constant persecution, begged that he might be sent to the army, and obtained permission to wear the uniform only by "giving pledges" of his contrition.‡

Fauche-Borel did not hold out so long; after three days of humiliation in the prison of La Force he was, in the language of the police, "cooked to a turn." He addressed to Desmarest a humble petition, protesting his repentance, declaring that the death of Pichegru, with whom he had had relations, had set him absolutely at liberty; he proclaimed "his attachment to the Government"; his submission was unequivocal; nothing could be more definite: "I place myself entirely in your hands, as I have often wished I might do: you know that I can be of *very special* service to you, and there are at the present time few men who can serve you so advantageously as I. I shall explain my methods to you, and am convinced that I shall merit your confidence by my discretion; it is by attaching myself to those who understand their business, and are able to distinguish between adventurers and upright men, that I hope to effect my own advancement and to benefit my family."§ Did Desmarest then and there test the zeal by which fear and stupidity flattered him? Did Fouché, who returned to the Ministry of Police a few weeks later, obtain from the bookseller, as

* Madelin (*Fouché*, i., 479) referring to *Archives nationales*, F^7 6448, in which there is a note of Desmarest's on Dubouchet.

† *Archives nationales*, F^7 6371; and *Le R. P. de Closrivière*, by le R. P. Terrien.

‡ *Archives nationales*, F^7 6107.

§ Letter written by Fauche-Borel from the prison of La Force, on 26 Prairial, year XII.=June 15, 1804. Desmarest writes in the margin of this latter: "Wants to be employed a spy," and indexed it carefully amidst the other documents of his *dossier*—F^7 6319^A—so that he could find it when required.

a sort of entrance-fee, useful accusations or items of information? Probably; for on August 16 Fauche was sent back to the Temple, doubtless in the capacity of a police-spy.* Moreover, he was now accused, not of conspiracy, but merely of "manœuvres" against the safety of the State.† The difference was considerable, and this was the price paid for his "conversion." It now remained merely to restore him to liberty; but in order to preserve his reputation and avoid blackening him in the eyes of the *émigrés*, to whom he would return, no longer as a trustworthy agent but as a spy, his liberation had to be effected subject to certain delays.

To begin with, he summoned to Paris his brother François, the Hamburg bookseller, who arrived bearing the most urgent instructions from the King of Prussia to his Minister in France, the Marquis de Lucchesini; and while the latter made certain demands in Fauche-Borel's interests, François Fauche, profiting by his stay in the capital to conclude certain business transactions, entered into relations with the bookseller Perlet, whose first success, and subsequent vicissitudes, and final downfall, have already been briefly alluded to. Perlet, we are told, was a native of Geneva, almost a fellow-countryman of Fauche's; he proved to be extremely obliging, and offered the assistance of his relations: although a rabid Royalist—if we are to take his own word for it—he had from early childhood been on terms of friendship with a person whose influence was likely to be far greater than that of the Prussian Minister. This person was Veyrat, Inspector-General of the Prefecture of Police; in short, a power in the land. Veyrat also was from Geneva; no doubt he did his utmost to secure Fauche-Borel's liberation. Of these meetings and procedures there is no record in the *dossiers* of those concerned; we are reduced to Fauche-Borel's *Mémoires*, and in respect of these incidents he is, by a too rare exception, strangely laconic, and his narrative

* What we know as a "copper's nark" the French call a sheep, a *mouton;* originally, perhaps, a bell-wether.—*Translator.*

† Jailers' register, Prison of the Temple.

even displays a certain amount of embarrassment. In short, thanks to the combined efforts of the Prussian Minister and a greatly-dreaded police-official, Fauche at length saw the doors of his jail swing open, after thirty-one months of imprisonment. The decree obtained in his case required that he should be escorted by the gendarmerie as far as the frontier, and deposited within the territory of His Prussian Majesty. His brother, and the jailer Fauconnier himself, who had become attached to his prisoner during his long detention, accompanied him as far as Saint-Denis, the first stage of the long journey; and there the bookseller was bound with a cord whose ends were twisted round the wrists of two gendarmes, and the three set off, on foot; this being the etiquette of travelling "by correspondence," that is, from brigade to brigade. At nightfall the hapless bookseller was thrust, until the morning, into some village prison; and his fastidious tastes suffered greatly from this procedure. At Laon,* thanks to a complaisant corporal of gendarmerie, he was able to obtain a post-chaise;† he passed through Namur and Aix-la-Chapelle, crossed the Rhine, and at length, on March 6, arrived at Wesel, beyond the frontier of the Empire. He had entered France two and a half years previously, as a Royalist agent; he left it a spy in the pay of Fouché.

It really seems as though he did not at first understand the serious and perilous nature of this experiment. He would have been genuinely astonished had he been warned that he had fettered himself in a chain of his own riveting, from which he would not find it easy to free himself. He could not seriously flatter himself that he had broken it merely by crossing the frontier, for the police service, under Réal and Desmarest, stretched its tentacles all over

* He writes *Langres ;* evidently a mistake.

† "Yesterday, February 18, at 7 o'clock in the morning, Fauche-Borel left the Temple for Münster. For reasons of economy he preferred to make the journey on foot, passing from one military command to the next, instead of driving; accompanied by an officer of gendarmerie, as required by the decree" (*Bulletin de police*, 30 Nivôse, year XIII.=February 19, 1805; d'Hauterive, i., 931).

Europe, and none of those who were "wanted" by it, were they in Berlin, Rome, or Vienna, were able to escape its embrace. "All Switzerland, Germany, Prussia, and Denmark were under the influence of Bonaparte, to such a point that a word from his ambassador to any of these Powers was enough to send us back to France as prisoners," wrote a Chouan who had escaped from the prisons of the Empire.* Now Fauche-Borel's arrival in Prussia had already been communicated from Paris to M. de la Forest, French Ambassador in Berlin, and he was requested to keep a special watch† upon the Swiss bookseller. But to which party would Fauche attach himself? Would he serve his new masters or the Bourbons? Would he try to serve them alternately, or might he not endeavour to work for both simultaneously? As a beginning, while still in Wesel, he addressed a first report to Desmarest.‡ He then proceeded to Berlin; at Münster, where he broke his journey, he was for a moment somewhat perturbed on encountering that Leclerc-Boisvalon, the man with the wall-eye, the indefatigable Royalist who had so long been living a life of constant risk, passing from hiding-place to hiding-place—the very man whom Fauche-Borel had visited the day before his arrest. At first the two men approached one another with a sense of mutual distrust. Fauche, whose conscience may have been troubling him, felt uneasy at finding here, in a position to report his passage through the town, this nomad of "the good cause," whose activities were as mysterious as his means of subsistence. Was this mysterious Leclerc a spy of Fouché's, required to make sure that the banished man remained faithful to the pact into which he had entered, or an English agent already informed of the bookseller's defection? Fauche preferred not to enquire too closely, and to make his escape as quickly as might be,

* *Mémoires* of Michelot Moulin, relating to the Royalist cause in Normandy, published by the *Société d'Histoire contemporaine*, 247.

† *Bulletin de Police*, of 4 Prairial, year XIII.=May 24, 1805; d'Hauterive, i., 1388.

‡ *Bulletin de Police*, of 25 Ventôse, year XIII.=March 16, 1805; d'Hauterive, i., 1038.

for in those days, in that dubious society, which contained what we might call the residue of the emigration, one never knew whether one had to do with a faithful friend or a traitor; for how many of these unfortunates, repulsed on every hand, and beside themselves with poverty, humiliation, and disgust, had resigned themselves to selling their souls in the hope of earning their bread, and, at some later date, obtaining permission to re-enter France!

On arriving in Berlin Fauche had to call on the French Ambassador, who offered him the choice of three places of residence: Breslau, Danzig, or Warsaw, where he would be placed under the supervision of the French police.* The prospect of this period of probation was anything but pleasing. What would he, what could he do in such places? How could he find there, in the secret service of the usurper, a position equal to that which had won him the confidence of the Bourbon Princes? He was compelled to take stock, for he had not a thaler left; at Wesel he was forced to pawn his two watches; he was forbidden to return to Neuchâtel, but that did not, as a matter of fact, particularly grieve him, his old house in the Rue de l'Hôpital being but a poor background to a man of his worth. Poor Mme. Fauche was living there in poverty, as we learn from the recital of four Royalist agents who had escaped from the fortress of Joux. One of them, Charles de Frotté, the brother of the famous leader of the Chouan forces in Normandy, had met Fauche-Borel in the Temple, when he himself was imprisoned there, and the bookseller had handed him, on the spur of the moment, a letter of introduction. Wandering through the Jura mountains in the January of 1805, the four fugitives reached Neuchâtel, where they presented themselves to Mme. Fauche, who gave them a kindly welcome, calling for hot water, bathing their blistered feet with her own hands, and bringing them supper; but although they were

* *Bulletin de Police*, of 4 Prairial, year XIII. = May 24, 1805. d'Hauterive, i., 443.

quite without money, she had nothing in the house to lend them.*

Fauche-Borel himself lived in constant relations with "crowned heads." With brazen effrontery he decided to serve Fouché, in order to avoid the unwelcome attentions of the French police, and at the same time to continue his career as an agent of the Bourbons, so unfortunately interrupted just when it promised to become successful and lucrative. With perfect self-possession he resumed his former mode of existence. He never passed through a capital city but he felt it incumbent on him to pay his respects to the ruler of the country; thus, in Brunswick, he called upon His Serene Highness the reigning duke, and at Potsdam he obtained an interview with the King of Prussia, Frederic William, and Queen Louise, whose kindly phrases, he informs us, would remain engraved upon his heart. In Berlin he called upon Mr. Jackson, the English Minister, and Count Novosiltzov, the Russian Ambassador, to whom he gave three "important" notes, addressed to the Tsar. Wherever he went he described his captivity in the Temple, and his hearers listened "with compassion." He then busied himself "with re-awakening the military spirit in Prussia"—though for that matter its slumbers were never very deep in that corner of Europe, and with this end he published at his own expense a pamphlet by d'Antraigues, for he was always able to make his proceedings profitable; or so it would seem, for even at the beginning of his stay in Berlin he had considerable sums† at his disposal. So great was his desire to appear well-informed that he even sent to London, by the hand of a Cabinet messenger, the welcome news of the bloody defeat suffered by Napoleon . . . on the field of Austerlitz! The rumour of a Russian victory was going the rounds in Berlin, and Fauche was a little too hasty in confirming it in accordance with his personal desires.

* *Mémoires* of Michelot Moulin on the Chouans in Normandy, published by the *Société d'Histoire contemporaine.*

† Fauche-Borel, *Mémoires,* iii., 233. He tells us that he lost 50,000 francs in the bookselling business which he had recently started in Berlin.

Meanwhile, in order to appease the suspicions of the French Ambassador, who was instructed to keep a watch upon him, he forwarded, through His Excellency, some reports to Desmarest—reports, it is true, of no great value;* but he promised very shortly to supplement them. As a matter of fact, he presently forwarded to the Paris police, by two different bearers, a document of the greatest importance: this was the copy made, he insisted, "from the original, which had been forwarded to him," of an indignant and inspiriting declaration on the part of Louis XVIII., solemnly protesting against the occupation of his throne by Bonaparte. Fauche was of real service to Fouché's assistants in drawing their attention to this subversive production, whose secret introduction into France might have revived dangerous reminiscences. But while he was hypocritically denouncing it to Desmarest, Fauche had it set up in Berlin, struck off ten thousand copies of it, and undertook to send them to everybody who was anybody in Parisian society, to every Government official, to all the booksellers of France, as far as he knew of them, to a number of private individuals, whom he could count upon to make it further known, and even to his friend Fauconnier, the jailer of the Temple. When, being warned by timid persons, still quaking at having received, they knew not whence, this compromising document, Desmarest had a respectable proportion of the pamphlets seized in the post;† when he realised that all the addresses were written in Fauche-Borel's hand, and that the bookseller was distributing the manifesto which he had denounced as being seditious, it did not take him long to discover the double-faced dealings of this ungrateful knave. A report was drawn up and forwarded to the Emperor, and orders were dispatched to Berlin to the effect that the impostor was to

* *Bulletin de Police*, 3 Nivôse, year XIV.=December 24, 1805; d'Hauterive, ii., 629.

† Fauche-Borel's *dossier*, in the *Archives nationales*, contains several copies. Their size is that of a playing-card, so that they might be placed in an ordinary envelope without folding.

be arrested.* The King of Prussia willingly gave his consent to this procedure, for since he was making ready to oppose Napoleon he was at some pains to appear the most docile of his allies; he even made a show of indignation on learning of the bookseller's scoundrelly impertinence† . . . while privately he advised him to secure himself against the persecutions of his gendarmes. Fauche assures us of this in his *Mémoires*,‡ and here he may well be speaking the truth, for this duplicity assuredly bears the Prussian trademark. Profiting without delay by this friendly advice, Fauche set out for England.§ He thought thus to escape the vengeance of Desmarest; but the official had an inventive mind and many resources, and was already maturing a plan of vengeance—the vengeance of a policeman who was not devoid of genius. "It

* *Bulletin de Police*, January 10, 1806; d'Hauterive, ii., 684. "There is no room for doubt that the Proclamation to the French People was printed in Berlin; at all events, it was sent out from that city; and there all the envelopes were made, and all the addresses were written, although some were received in France under the Hanover or Frankfort postmark; but the addresses on the envelopes dispatched from these various cities are all written in the same hand, on the same paper; the paper was the same, and so was the water-mark. Moreover, it is an open secret that all the envelopes that have so far come into the possession of the police are addressed in Fauche-Borel's hand. The handwritings are absolutely identical, and there is not the slightest room for doubt. For the rest, we see that when dispatching these documents, Fauche-Borel forgot none of his friends—and enemies—or even his mere acquaintances, including the jailer of the Temple. For that matter, when this conspirator, not long ago, sent the manuscript of this proclamation to the official head of the police, protesting his fidelity to the promises which he had made, to serve the interests of France, he had only to draw upon the stock of the pamphlets then in his hands. As yet no one has confessed to receiving these pamphlets."

† *Bulletin de Police*, February 27, 1806; d'Hauterive, ii., 857.

‡ *Mémoires*, iii., 232.

§ He claims that he went by way of the headquarters of the King of Sweden, and had two confidential interviews with that sovereign. The police reports, which are well-informed and perhaps more credible, state that he went to London, entrusted by Prince Pignatelli-Marsiconovo, his sometime fellow-prisoner in the Temple, to sell to England for some millions of francs an army which the Prince professed to possess on his Italian territories (*Bulletin de Police*, February 6, 1806; d'Hauterive, ii., 775).

is highly probable," he wrote to the Emperor, "that this rogue will be caught one day in the trap which he has set."*

Barely a month after his arrival in London Fauche-Borel received a letter from his brother François, the inconstant bookseller of Hamburg, who, having first transferrred his business to Brunswick, was now settled in Berlin. François Fauche, since his stay in Paris, had maintained a correspondence with Perlet, that poor devil of a journalist, the object of Jacobin spite, who was now vegetating, after a hundred notorious adventures, ruined, and without means to rebuild his shattered fortunes, but still boasting that he cherished in his heart the impregnable convictions of the purest royalism.† Perlet therefore wrote to François Fauche, expatiating on his grief and his impotent wrath, confiding to him in plain language his unhappiness at seeing France bowed beneath the yoke of a tyrant. Greatly esteemed by the older heads among the "*Fructidorisés*," and maintaining his relations with men of every party, "having one friend," he tells us, "who was one of the most powerful functionaries of the new Government, he knew that Bonaparte was not loved; those that were about the Emperor endured his despotic temper with impatience, and lived in the sole hope of deliverance; several of his generals did not conceal their jealous hostility, and if one could bring these malcontents together, there was no doubt that the cause of the King would find in them determined defenders."

* *Bulletin de Police*, January 10, 1806; d'Hauterive, ii., 684.

† Whatever Fauche-Borel may say about it, Perlet was in close touch with him, as well as with his brother François, before the year 1806. There is a letter of Perlet's in which he writes: "I am in the closest touch with Louis Fauche-Borel, now in Berlin, acting still as the agent of England and the secret agent of the Princes, and I have already increased the unlimited confidence which he had in me by informing him, on November 21 last, that I was in the closest touch with Vincent, and that . . . we very often spoke of him." This letter, undated, and without the name of the recipient, was doubtless addressed to Veyrat; it was probably written in December, 1805, or at the beginning of January, 1806 (*Archives de la Préfecture de Police*, Affaires Fauche-Borel).

Such was the theme of Perlet's letter to François Fauche.* The latter, whose business, repeatedly interrupted, was by no means prosperous, contrived to profit, as did his brother, by the easy and lucrative pastime of fishing in the troubled waters of *émigré* politics, realised all the profit that might be obtained from a man like Perlet, well-informed, thoroughly familiar with the men and the events of the Revolution, and fully prepared, thanks to his hatred of Bonaparte, who neglected to employ him, and his resentment against the Jacobins who banished him, to serve the Bourbons; his fidelity to them, even in the darkest days of the Directoire, being a matter of common knowledge. Such a man would be a valuable correspondent, and it was impossible to doubt either his loyality or his sincerity. François Fauche replied to Perlet by a letter written in a most friendly spirit inviting him "to open his heart," and assuring him that anything he might write concerning the state of opinion in France would be of the greatest value to the Royalist cause.† Perlet did "open his heart," and wrote without any reservation: "Things," he said, "were much more advanced than he had announced in his first letter; there was in Paris a *Secret Committee*, consisting of highly influential persons, constituted with the idea of overthrowing Napoleon on the first favourable opportunity. Among the more influential members of this committee there were Marshals and Cabinet Ministers, resolute supporters of legitimacy; the friend to whom he had alluded was one of the most influential of these; the police itself was represented on the Committee

* It will be as well here to verify certain dates. On January 10, 1806, Desmarest writes: "It is probable that Fauche-Borel will be caught one day in the trap which he has set." We have not succeeded in tracing Perlet's first letter, but it must at latest have been written between February 10 and 15, for François Fauche's reply is written on January 1, Berlin, and a letter entrusted to the post took ten days or a fortnight to cover the distance between Paris and the Prussian capital.

† He sent him, in addition to the complete text of Louis XVIII.'s manifesto, a receipt for a fluid that would cause sympathetic ink to become visible: "Take some nitric acid in which you have dissolved a couple of sewing needles. . . ."

by a very highly placed personnage, which explains the mystery, hitherto impenetrable, by which this obscure and powerful organisation has profited."

Delighted to receive this amazing revelation, François Fauche did not feel that he had a right to keep to himself a communication of such importance. He submitted it to Monsieur le Comte de Moustier, representing Louis XVIII. in Berlin; Moustier, no less surprised and delighted, promptly sent Perlet's letter to his master, the King, who had now been living for six years at Mitau in Courland, where he was the guest of the Tsar Alexander. While waiting for the Pretender's approval, he had to keep the ball rolling—that is, to keep this correspondence in being; but he had to act with the greatest prudence, lest he should compromise the heroic Perlet, in the first place, and, secondly, the members of the Royalist Committee, which, unknown to the world, continued to sit in Paris. Fauche-Borel was one of the first to hear of the existence of this Committee. He could not leave London, where he was employed, on Wickham's recommendation, in the office of M. de la Chapelle, the *chargé d'affaires* in the Royalist legation to the Court of George III.; for which he received an annual salary of 400 guineas. It was important, however, that he should without delay inform the British Cabinet of the new situation created by Perlet's confidential reports, so that the British Government should be ready to act—and also to pay out money—in case the Bourbons should be recalled to France before there was time to decide upon a change of policy.

While they awaited this happy day the correspondence between Perlet and François Fauche was most assiduously continued. Fauche recommends "the most minute precautions;" he is alarmed by the dangers "to which his very dear friend" is exposing himself, and greatly distressed by his rashness; "he must not speak too plainly; he must not sign his letters to Perlet; he must surely know that there is in France a secret office, a *cabinet noir*, and that if one of his letters were opened there it would be all up with him, and with all the members of the Committee!" and he sent

Perlet formulæ for invisible ink, but he does not even venture to write these few words, but takes a roundabout way of making himself understood: "Monsieur Guillot leaves tomorrow for Paris; he will bring you a small box containing *elixir for the teeth.*"* "As for me," he protests, "I have not mentioned your name, and my head shall fall before your name shall leave my lips. The intermediary agents must, of course, remain unknown until the time comes to reward them. . . . I hope you will burn the originals, and that you will keep no copies in your rooms. . . ." Perlet, as a matter of fact, appears to have been quite fearless, so powerful and so sincere is the Royalism which inspires him; nevertheless, he assents, in order to reassure the timid François as to his possible fate, to sign his letters with the pseudonym Bourlac, and to make use of sympathetic inks; but these are either too corrosive or too weak; they either burn the paper or fail to leave legible traces. One of the letters† is absolutely illegible as the result of their action, and it is agreed that these chemical requisites should be reserved for important secrets. As a rule a secret vocabulary is employed, and since both of the correspondents are printers, their cryptography is comprised of terms borrowed from their calling and names familiar to the publisher. *Paper* means "artillery"; *in-quarto*, the "army within the frontiers"; *petit format*, "the tribunal"; *vignettes*, "frigates"; *figures*, "fusillades"; *volumes détachés*, "national stock"; Moreau became *Firmin Didot;* Louis XVIII., *Fietta;* Macdonald, *Charon;* the Royalist party, *Fain et Cie;* Desmarest, *Crapelet;* the prefect of the police Dubois, *Cellot frères;* the Count d'Avaray, the intimate confidant of the King, *Courtener;* Fauche-Borel, *Dodeley;* Mme. Bonaparte (Mme. Mère) (*sic*), *Madame Masson;* Napoleon, *Le Petit;* Fouché, *Maradan;* Austria, *la veuve Frolich*, etc., etc. . . .‡ This expedient produced the most

* Letter No. 7 from François Fauche to Perlet, Berlin, May 6, 1806. *Archives de la Préfecture de Police*, "Affaire Fauche-Borel."

† *Archives, Préfecture de Police.*

‡ All these names are those of publishers, printers, and dealers in paper who had recently had dealings with Fauche's publishing-house.

fantastic texts, as will be seen from the following: "Riss and Saucet do not understand the veneration which compositors feel for long-established presses. Givel alone is a dealer in old books, and such is the power of the virtues which guide him that in less than six months he compelled the paper-makers to admire him, and to regard him in future as their most beneficent customer"—which, being interpreted, means: The Russians do not feel that veneration with which the nations regard ancient monarchies. The King of Sweden only is actuated by worthy principles, and such is the power of the virtues which guide him that in less than six months he compelled the nations to admire him."* It was a clumsy stratagem, for if the spies of the censor's office had opened the letters of François Fauche—an indiscretion from which they were saved, as we shall presently see—they could not have failed to be astonished by the extraordinary case of "this dealer in old books, compelling, 'by the power of his virtues,' the admiration of the paper-makers." But François Fauche, the inventor of this vocabulary, was proud of his work. "Under the screen of the publishing-houses," he wrote, "one can say anything."

Perlet, however, had not, as a rule, recourse to it. The news contained in his fortnightly letters was read with the greatest delight by François Fauche, no less than by Fauche-Borel, to whom they were immediately forwarded; better still, copies of these letters were sent to Mitau, where they were read by Comte d'Avaray and by Louis XVIII. himself. They announced, indeed, that the mysterious Royalist Committee in Paris, which included so many of Perlet's most influential friends, was obviously impatiently waiting to commence activities, and that the hours of Bonaparte's rule were numbered. Perlet could not mention any names, since such imprudence would "ruin everything"; but he insisted, as a certainty, that the highest dignitaries of the Imperial Court, those whom Napoleon, in his blindness, regarded as the unfailing supporters of the throne, had all

* Letter from François Fauche to Perlet, No. 12 *bis*, July 5, 1806. (*Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6319A.)

been won over to the Bourbons, and were only waiting to receive a sign from the King at Mitau in order to proceed with the work of restoration. Perlet stated these astonishing facts with such an air of authority and unfolded their profounder motives with such manifest knowledge of their obscurest policies, that it was impossible to question any of his assertions. The Comte d'Avaray, embittered by misfortune, exile, and disease, and suspicious of the best-authenticated Royalists, believed in Perlet's integrity. Comte de Moustier, representing Louis XVIII. in Berlin, had the greatest faith in Perlet. Louis XVIII. himself, the most prudent and most circumspect of men, had entire faith in the sincerity of this loyal correspondent. He wrote to Moustier saying that some means must be considered for rewarding zeal, assuring him "that this would be his first care, and that this duty would be the first to demand consideration in respect of the proposed employment of the funds which it was presumed would be available."*

François Fauche, for his part, did his best to cherish these generous inclinations, from which he hoped to derive considerable profit. He wrote to d'Avaray: "I am sending *Louis* (Fauche-Borel) *Bourlac's* (Perlet's) original letter. If *these gentlemen* (the English Cabinet) do not find it sufficiently definite, what is one to send them? Names? No one could seriously suggest this; it would be making them an offer to accept or refuse as they chose. It is of urgent importance to make the London people realise the confidence which His Majesty Louis XVIII. reposes in Bourlac's letters, and the accomplishments and zeal of the two brothers (himself and Fauche-Borel): this trio is inseparable." It will be seen that he did not overlook himself in the distribution of favours and indemnities. Intoxicated by the prospects of pensions, the orders of knighthood, and the well-paid posts which would be scattered broadcast by the Restoration, he became delirous with joy, as we see from a letter of his to Perlet, "his most excellent friend." He is not yet tired of reading and re-reading Perlet's last report; he feels that his soul is uplifted

* Letter No. 7, May 6, 1806.

by these divine pages to a region of happiness unknown to his heart, hitherto crushed by the protracted public misfortunes; "but it is the King himself," he adds, "who must tell you all that your glorious labours and your noble virtues deserve. You may rejoice beforehand at the happiness which you have poured with full hands into so many grieving hearts; and this will be an earnest of the rewards which await you!"* Louis XVIII., as a matter of fact, did make known his desire that the expression of his gratitude should be conveyed to François Fauche's estimable friend, and was anxious, "despite his cruel poverty," to defray the cost of this important correspondence.† From May, 1806, onwards François Fauche's sole anxiety was lest matters should move too quickly, and lest the King should be taken unawares. Mitau is a long way from Paris! He therefore thought it prudent to organise a Council of Regency, which, should events take them by surprise, should govern France while awaiting His Majesty's arrival.‡ Accordingly Perlet —perhaps with some amazement—found himself entrusted with the construction of a provisional Government which was to succeed Napoleon, and hand France back to the brother of Louis XVI.

* *Archives de la Préfecture de Police*, letter 23.
† *Idem*, letter 5. ‡ *Idem*, letter 8.

CHAPTER IV

PERLET

PERLET was a police-spy; the most obscure, the basest, perhaps the most despised of that rabble of outcasts of which Desmarest's police consisted. On his return from Cayenne, whither the affair of Fructidor had sent him, he found that he had lost beyond recovery a fortune estimated by himself at some 500,000 francs. The world had changed while he was out of it, and he was able neither to recover his position nor to find some occupation which would gain him a livelihood.* Having a wife and children, and being weary of a life of destitution, he gave up the struggle, like so many others, and endeavoured to join the police.

Before the Revolution, when he was still living in Geneva, he was on terms of friendship with a money-lender, one Veyrat, who, accused of issuing false money,† was imprisoned and afterwards banished. He returned to Geneva at the time of the quarrel between "the natives and the Oligarchs," and blossomed forth as a pitiless Terrorist.‡ Settling in Paris about the end of 1795, Veyrat first of all kept a small shop in the Faubourg Saint-Denis, but as his ambitions outran his success he entered the police, and was appointed inspector at the time of the Fructidorian *coup*

* Fiévée, Perlet's brother-in-law, recommending Perlet to the Minister of Police in 1810, said: "Deported to Cayenne, he escaped despite a thousand perils, returned to France, and found that his fortune had absolutely disappeared. All his subsequent attempts to find his feet again have failed. . . ." (*Archives nationales*, F^7 6238). In the *Archives of la Seine*, "Domaines," 34-99, there is a record of the sale of Perlet's movable property in the year V., and again in the year VI.

† *Archives nationales*, F^7 6197.

‡ *Idem*, F^7 6197.

VEYRAT

Inspector-General of the Imperial Police.

(*Archives of the Prefecture of Police.*)

To face p. 114.

d'état, by the Minister Sotin;* dismissed by Dondeau,† and restored to his post by Duval,‡ he cared nothing for the men or the parties of the Revolution. He did not belong to any particular circle, and he was actuated by only one motive: an all-absorbing desire for wealth. Appointed Inspector-General at the Prefecture after the 18 Brumaire he displayed an ingenious greed in his methods of increasing the profits of his post. Veyrat's name is constantly found in the *dossiers* of the Consulate and the Imperial police. Nevertheless, no individual study has ever been made of this sinister figure; but as he will often reappear during the course of this narrative, it will be well to give him a moment's attention. Not that we shall find it possible to draw an exact portrait of the gentleman. Like all police officials, Veyrat was execrated by some—those whom he caught in his trap—and highly appreciated by others—to whom he had been of service. To judge from his reports he appears to have been greedy for gain, but not brutal; he wrote correctly, with ease, precision, and good taste, and exercised his terrible functions without cruelty. "His manners and appearance are good," writes Charles Nodier, who was one of his "clients"; and he adds, "If I had to be arrested again, it is probable that I should regret Monsieur Veyrat."§ On the other hand, Rémusat, one of the many who had had to do with him, describes him as a "ferocious brute," although, as a matter of fact, the circumstances in which he depicts him do not really justify such an unfriendly description.‖ Pasquier, who had had Veyrat as subordinate, thought him "one of the worst rascals one could possibly meet with";¶ but this was the opinion of a superior, and Veyrat cannot, as a subordinate, have been easy to handle. As he made money out of everything, he resold to the book-

* Sotin was Minister of the Police from July 26, 1797, to February 12, 1798.

† Minister from February 17 to May 15, 1798.

‡ Minister from October 29, 1798, to June 22, 1799.

§ *Souvenirs de la Révolution*, ii., 13.

‖ B. Fr. de Rémusat, *Mémoire sur ma Detention au Temple*, 1797-1799.

¶ *Mémoires*, i., 414.

sellers the obscene books which it was his mission to seize;* furthermore, he was said to have trafficked "in the liberty of his fellow-citizens," and for a biggish fee, varying from 50 to 200 louis, he would take measures to avoid encountering suspects whom it was his duty to arrest.† What made him so formidable was his intimate friendship with Constant, the Emperor's valet; it was even said that he was in direct touch with His Majesty,‡ and head of a special police whose function it was to inform the sovereign of all that was being planned at the Prefecture and the Ministry of Police, to which the Inspector-General had free access.

Such was the powerful personage to whom Perlet, at the end of his resources, confessed his poverty, timidly enough at first: "Betrayed, abandoned by all those whom I have benefited, I seek to renew relations with an old friend whom I have not forgotten; I hasten to write to him and to ask him for an interview at his house.—PERLET, February 19, 1805." Veyrat felt some pity for the man, and gave him an interview, assured him of his friendship, and a fortnight later advanced him 1,500 francs, and asked him if he would

* Forneron, *Émigrés*, iii., 35. Pasquier, *Mémoires*, i., 451. The Prefect of the police, Dubois, did not sell the obscene books seized by his officers, but gave them to his friends. "I was told," says Pasquier, "that on several occasions that when giving a dinner to his colleagues, in the Department of the Interior, Dubois paid each of them the delicate compliment of presenting him with a packet containing the most curious publications of this kind which had recently appeared."

† *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6197. Report of agent No. 8. It is certain that Veyrat handled a great deal of money, and without supervision. Merely in the affair of the Comte de Tryon, the messenger-in-ordinary of the *émigrés*, condemned to death in the year VI., and François, sometime tutor to the sons of the Comte d'Artois, who had become one of Fouché's most intimate assistants, Veyrat seized and transferred to the Treasury the sum of 239,000 francs (see *Précis des faits relatifs au nomme François, émigré, premier agent du pretendu Louis XVIII.* [by Veyrat], and a communication of M. Montarlot's to the *Société d'Histoire contemporaine, 22nd assemblée*, June 20, 1912).

‡ The Veras (*sic*), father and son, had a means of communicating directly with the Emperor's cabinet (Rovigo, *Mémoires* [Garnier's edition], iii., 243 *et seq.*).

"work" for him.* Perlet gratefully agreed to do so; the Inspector-General tested him in the first place by giving him a few trivial tasks; they amounted simply to this: he had to accost, on some pretext or other, persons strolling through the public gardens, to enter into conversation with them, and, by inciting them to speak confidentially, to induce them, adroitly, "to speak against the Government," and thereupon to denounce them. We have Perlet's first reports;† it was a puerile and repugnant business. Veyrat found in his pupil some obvious propensity for such work, for after six months' apprenticeship he enrolled him in the service. I do not know whether Veyrat acquired of his neophytes an oath of passive obedience and blind servility; but we find, undated, in Perlet's writing, the following solemn engagement, which reads like a profession of eternal vows: "All that you tell me to do I shall do. I shall forget what I have been and what I have done. Try me; if you find me fail, cast me aside. My irrevocable determination is to help you to success. If you are fortunate I wish to share your good-fortune. If you are unfortunate, I shall be no less devoted. I am yours; nothing in the world will change me. . . ."‡ At the end of August, 1805, Perlet was given a fixed salary and frequent bonuses.§ He was saved—and lost.

From this time onwards we see how the net was woven into which Fauche-Borel was to step. Early in January, 1805, Desmarest realised that the bookseller was tricking him. On the 10th of that month he spoke to the Emperor, as we have seen, of the ingratitude displayed by this

* The text of Perlet's letters to Veyrat was published at the end of the *Mémoires* of Lombard de Langres who, in his capacity of advocate, drafted for in 1816, *La Mémoire pour Louis Fauche-Borel contre Perlet, ancien journaliste.*

† There are twenty-seven. (*Archives de la Préfecture de Police*, "Affaires Jouvencel.")

‡ *Addition au Mémoire de Fauche et qui se trouve dans la seconde Édition*, Lombard de Langres, ii., 253.

§ He received besides the 1,500 francs of March 3, 500 francs on September 6; 100 francs on November 9, 1805; 500 francs on September 25; 1,500 francs on October 11, 1706, etc.

intriguer, asserting that "the cheat will fall into the trap which he himself has set."* That very day he made his plans, seeking among his secret agents a man acquainted with the Fauche brothers, one in their confidence who could easily begin a correspondence with them. Veyrat, being consulted, suggested Perlet, a new recruit, whose enrolment in the service was as yet unknown, and who, on various occasions, had had dealings with the two brothers, in whose eyes, in his quality of a Fructidor'd exile, to say nothing of his repeated protestations, he passed for a militant member of the Royalist party. The exchange of letters began forthwith. Desmarest inspired and controlled the correspondence; he must have been responsible for the idea of the Royalist Committee, consisting of the leaders of the Imperialist party, for this wonderful Committee, whose powers and activities are vaunted by Perlet, was, of course, wholly a thing of the imagination. Desmarest's object, to begin with, was merely to attract Fauche-Borel to Paris, and to make him pay—dearly—for his defection. But the bait had to be a tempting one and the hook well hidden. With what seductive insinuations was the invitation tricked out! Says Perlet, addressing François Fauche:† "I have an understanding with those in authority . . . but oh, my friend! if after all my expedients, all my preparations, a good opportunity should arise, we should be unable to take advantage of it for lack of a leader! . . . It would be enough to make a man blow his brains out! In vain I have been racking my brains, trying to find in Paris the man capable of playing the part, but I can find no one; but in any case this would expose the dearest interests of the King to too great a risk; it is the King who must choose this indispensable person, who, until the decisive moment has come, will be known to me alone. . . . I could, without compromising him, mention to him the various persons on whom we could rely. . . . I am wholly and in all things

* Report of January 10, 1806, already cited.

† The letter is dated June 24, 1806. It is printed in the *Mémoire* of Lombard de Langres.

His Majesty's faithful servant." Perlet knows that his letters are sent to Fauche-Borel; he knows, too, that the bookseller, full of ideas about his own "experience," and anxious not to leave the path for another man to climb, will himself offer to be "the indispensable person" whose presence in Paris is so urgently required. But already Perlet is no more than an instrument in the hands of those more skilful than he; for having realised from François Fauche's replies the incredible credulity of Louis XVIII. and those about him, Fouché's officers were quick to see all the advantages which might be derived from this amazing trustfulness. To be sure, the idea of attracting Fauche-Borel to France was not a bad one, but it was now hoped that by means of him it might be possible to draw others thither: one of the young sons of the Comte d'Artois, or d'Artois himself perhaps, or—who knows?—even the Pretender might be persuaded to risk his royal person! In any case they would gradually become familiar with the plans, the intentions, the resources of the exile, and the amount of the subsidies which he was receiving from England, for the coaxing and flattery expressed in this correspondence were intended gradually to elicit these details. As the matter was a delicate one, and as it was feared that forcing the pace would result in letting the cat out of the bag, these experienced conspirators put their own shoulders to the wheel. Perlet, to tell the truth, was merely the agent, the go-between; he wrote the letters, but they were dictated by Desmarest, Dubois, and Fouché himself,* and thanks to the collaboration of these distinguished minds, the hoax attained majestic proportions. In order to prove that he is doing his utmost, and thanks to his activities, his Committee

* In 1815 Veyrat produced thirty-five documents connected with this plot, and amongst them five letters of Desmarest's, proving, so he says, "that Perlet's correspondence with the agents of the King was supervised by the Ministry of Police." Lombard de Langres (*Mémoires*, ii., 263, and Pasquier, *Mémoires*, i., 45) speaks of actually handling one of the letters written by Perlet—that of May 3, 1806: "It is at one and the same time the work of Monsieur Desmarest, Perlet, and Monsieur Dubois."

is day by day gaining adherents, Perlet informs Fauche that he has won over Veyrat himself to the Royalist cause—Veyrat himself, the chief support of the Imperial police: "He is absolutely devoted to us, and we are completely united; but he has explained his position; he will not take a hand in anything unless he is absolutely convinced that the means of action are available. See, my friend, that this necessity is understood, and reply to me plainly as regards this point. . . . It is necessary—and such is the opinion of the Committee—that he should be acquainted with all our plans and all that the supporters of *Fietta* (Louis XVIII.) are trying to do, whether in London or elsewhere, in order to centralise measures and avoid contrary courses of action." This stratagem had many advantages; it enabled Fouché to direct the affairs of the Royalist party as he chose, from the Quai Malaquais, and even to choose, as though they were his own subordinates, the men whom the proscribed King gathered about him. Did one of them displease him in Paris? Or did he wish to see another taken into favour? Nothing simpler: he had only to infuse a few phrases of acrid criticism into Perlet's letter, or a word or two of praise emanating from the mysterious Committee: "I may say that Monsieur d'Avaray understands nothing of important matters; he is not the man we need. . . . The reappearance of Lord Moira as a member of the British Cabinet would completely restore my courage, and would surely restore the affairs of our worthy *Fietta* (Louis XVIII.)." In this way Perlet's pen exerted an influence upon the preferences of the King of Mitau and the Ministers of George III.; what is more, both one and the other counted upon the Committee, although as yet they knew nothing of its composition. Perlet always refused to mention names; he expressed himself only by means of allusions, which in those days, one supposes, were transparent enough; and with Fauche-Borel's "clairvoyance" to help us, we may amuse ourselves by seeking to give names to the chimerical silhouettes, outlined by Perlet.

For in obedience to an order of the King's, François

Fauche surrendered the direction of this correspondence to his brother: and, in spite of Fauche-Borel's "profound knowledge" of revolutionary circles and the shady side of politics, he does not succeed in piercing the darkness in which Perlet's Committee is enshrouded. But he assures his friends that in one respect he is not mistaken—namely, in counting on Fouché's good-feeling. "For Fouché has saved, and is still saving, the true friends of the King."* It is a curious fact, but this opinion was entertained, not only by Fauche-Borel's vapid mind, but by the whole world of *émigrés;* Fouché, the man of the Mountain, Fouché the regicide, the proconsul of Nevers and Lyons, the terrible policeman of Napoleon Bonaparte, passed in the eyes of the upholders of the legitimate Ministry for the guardian angel of the Royalists. "As far back as 1803, two Chouan leaders, Suzannet and d'Andigne, had already assured d'Antraigues that Fouché was ready to overthrow Bonaparte's Government."† Such, too, was the belief of the British Cabinet; and the fact was known to Fouché, and—what is even stranger—it did not displease him; it obviously amused him to follow, in the letters mutually exchanged between Fauche-Borel and Perlet, the efforts of the former to "get the names," which the latter—as a point of honour, he declared—persisted in refusing to reveal, although he would have been hard put to it to do so! And so this nameless and non-existent Committee exerted an influence on the policy of the *émigrés*, and indirectly on that of England, Austria, and Russia.

This conspiracy, which would read like a farce, were it less distressingly repulsive, began to spread its roots, far and wide, within a year of its inception, thanks to the diligent care of Fauche-Borel, who devoted all his energy and all his time to the conduct of this "tremendous affair." This printer, who printed so little, was, on the other hand, a deplorably productive letter-writer; on the slightest pretext he would cover eight pages with his fluent but

* Fauche-Borel, *Mémoires*, iii., 254.

† Madelin, *Fouché*, ii., 16.

rather inaccurate script. Not only did he correspond with Perlet: he also copied the letters received from him and sent them to the King and the British Ministers, and accompanied them with endless commentaries and verbose considerations, touching the situation on the Continent,* or letters of advice, signed only with his Christian name, Louis, which under his pen assumed an ever-increasing air of royalty. What with living in frequent intercourse with princes, ambassadors, and statesmen, Fauche came to regard himself as a statesman, and the solemn vanity which he assumed in order to discuss, in the most serious manner imaginable, the hoax of which he was the dupe, must indeed have provided a curious spectacle. There are gems in his letters to friend *Bourlac*—such, as we have seen, was the pseudonym adopted by Perlet, at the urgent instance of Fauche: "I am instructed to advise you on behalf of Monsieur *Courtenner* (d'Avaray) that he is well, and to assure you of the satisfaction with which *Fietta* (Louis XVIII.) regards your work, and that of your Committee."† To this Committee Fauche was for ever recurring: he was eager to learn the secret of its composition. "If only you could assure us that you rely on Fouché! It would be a capital thing to have a man with such resources taking part in our affairs."‡ Perlet, having announced that "the greater part of the Paris police were at the disposal of the Committee," this terrific invention was accepted without a trace of scepticism; and, again, Fauche tries to obtain more exact information: "Are you 'in' with the police of Fouché and Desmarest, or are you working with Dubois' men?" (Dubois being the Prefect).§ The spy preferred not to dwell

* We find some letters of Fauche-Borel's in the portfolios of the *Archives de la Préfecture de Police*, the *Archives nationales*, and the *Archives des Affaires étrangères*. For the Bourbon funds see 604, 605, 615, 641. Some of *Bourlac's* (Perlet's) letters are in portfolio 604; but as most of them were written in invisible ink, the paper, eaten into by corrosives, and the colour of walnut-juice, is falling into dust. Copies are appended to these documents.

† *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 76519A, letter 52.

‡ *Idem*, letter 40.

§ *Idem*, letter 56.

on this subject; but Desmarest, who was something of a wag, and was fond of his joke, slipped into one of his agent's letters a discreet allusion to the offer of his services which Fauche, then a prisoner in La Force, had made him two years earlier, protesting "his devotion to the Imperial Government." Perlet, anticipating a certain uneasiness, asks Fauche "whether his Royalist convictions are truly sincere, and whether he has never played with the idea of rallying to Bonaparte."—"I do not understand how you can speak to me of your fears in respect of a change of party, and the revolting idea that I could even be so base as to attach myself to the execrable tyrant. I would die a thousand deaths rather than entertain such an idea!"* Which must have amused Desmarest vastly.

We hear an echo of his laughter in the reports drafted under his supervision and daily submitted to the Emperor. Serious enough, as a rule, they assume a bantering tone when there is mention of "the imminent defection, complete and simultaneous, of all the officials of the French Empire in favour of the Pretender."† The reports speak with amusement of Fauche-Borel's simplicity and the absolute confidence with which he regards "his friend in Paris," and of "the magnificent scheme concocted by the police agent (Perlet, to whom the official report never alludes otherwise), a scheme which consists of "a Royalist legation to Paris, composed of a soldier of note, a senator, etc., Fauche to act as the intermediary between the said legation and the King";‡—they refer in a scoffing tone to the credulous delight of the said King, who is "touched to the quick to learn how his interests are advanced by the police agent," of whom he speaks as "his strongest prop"; —and even the Emperor himself is informed that "the foundation of this precious scheme is to overthrow the tyrant and purge France of his infamous crew";—"the plot is being prepared in London," says one report, "and all that

* *Archives nationales*, F 76319A, letter 40.

† Police reports of April 23, 1806; d'Hauterive, ii., 1043.

‡ *Bulletin de Police*, June 27, 1806; d'Hauterive, ii., 1271.

is needed is an agent invested with full powers." So sure is he of its success that Fauche is already requesting that he " shall not be forgotten in the distribution of the funds." But all this is told in the daily reports, without detail and without explanation, mingled with other miscellaneous facts, so that the Emperor could not, as a matter of fact, understand a word of it all unless someone had furnished him verbally with additional information. One would like to think that he did not ask for such information, that he did not authorise or approve of a hoax unworthy of his greatness.

What surprises us now is the fact that Louis XVIII., cautious and thoughtful, and the British Cabinet, prudent, and, by reason of experience, distrustful, should have been caught in such a trap; the more so, as Perlet's imaginary Committee was not even original. Three years earlier another adventurer, Mehée de La Touche, who was likewise in the pay of the police, had hoaxed the Comte d'Artois, the British Ministers, and their agents on the Continent in the same fashion, and, having obtained their confidence and their guineas, he cynically published the farcical story of his sorry jest,* thereby causing a great sensation. Are we to suppose that in those days the acuteness of the most perspicacious mind was blunted by the brutal incoherence of passing events ? After more than a hundred years the story still seems incredible to us: how, then, did it strike a contemporary ? Can we, for example, imagine the tremendous effect, in foreign Courts, which for centuries had been, as it were, congealed in their veneration of hierarchic heredity and old aristocracies, when on the first page on the *Almanach imperial pour l'An XVIII.*, under the traditional heading: " Births and Alliances of the Princes and Princesses of Europe: *France*," they read, with bewilderment, the name of Napoleon, followed by the tale of the whole Bonaparte family ? Where did these people come from ? Here was one who, two years earlier, was a linen-worker at Marseilles; another, now described as

* *Alliance des Jacobins de France avec le ministère anglais, suivie de stratagèmes de Frère Drake, sa correspondance, ses plans de campagne.* Paris, year XII.

" brother-in-law to the Emperor, Grand Admiral, Marshal of the Empire, Governor of Paris," was the son of a tavern-keeper. And there was also a long string of "Grand Almoners, pages, Ladies-in-Waiting, and Heralds—who bore such names as Sallengros and Zimmermann! Was it possible to believe in the permanence of such a masquerade? How could these farcical nobodies, these climbers, find backers in Paris, a city famed for her tact and her respect for tradition! From the first outbreak of the Revolution the exiled Princes, with their absolute inability to understand the new spirit of France, persisted in cherishing the illusion that no one could dream of a more desirable lot than that of serving the Royal cause, or a more enviable reputation than that of deserving their favour. Among themselves they feared one another, and were jealous of one another; Louis XVIII. dreaded the inconsequent temper of his brother d'Artois, who in his turn suspected his cousin of Orleans; both were offended by the popularity of the Prince de Condé, and were even afraid to advance the two young Dukes of Angoulême and Berry, lest France, touched to enthusiasm by their gallant bearing, should fling herself into the arms of one or the other. Apart from their own family, however, the Bourbons were unwilling to regard their rebellious subjects as anything worse than friends ready to devote themselves to the Bourbon cause. Consequently, as soon as a man appeared to be emerging from the surrounding democracy and gave proof of his superiority, they believed that they only had to speak a word to him, and he would obediently rally to their cause and protest his submission. It was in this spirit that they "tried" Cambaceres,* who was, they believed, ready, as early as 1795, to "sue for pardon"; then they tried to seduce Pichegru, as has already been told; after Pichegru, they sounded Moreau, Hoche, and Kellermann;† an attempt was made to corrupt Boissy-d'Anglas‡ and Oudinot;§ and shortly

* *Souvenirs de Montgaillard*, 248.

† Daudet, *Émigration*, i., 385; ii., 16. ‡ *Idem*, ii., 24-25.

§ Caudrillier, *Trahison de Pichegru*, 198 and note.

before the 18 Brumaire it was believed that Talleyrand was to be won—he was known, by the way, as the Bishop of Autun—but the prelate asked for the impossible.* Barras was sounded; advances were made to Carnot, although these negotiations were most repugnant to d'Avaray, that uncompromising person being unable to see "the use of bringing over these blood-stained tyrants."† By Brumaire an attack was opened upon Lebrun, the third Consul, who replied by a dry but polite refusal; an appeal was made to Josephine, the wife of the tyrant Bonaparte, whom Mme. Hue, an old friend, asserted to be a "Royalist"; several successive attempts were made on Berthier, Napoleon's faithful comrade; born at Versailles, where his mother had been one of the chamber-maids of the palace, he himself, as a youth, had been employed by Louis XVI. in drawing maps of the country over which the King hunted. So extreme was the aberration of the little Court that no member of the latter entertained any doubts as to the regrets which this brilliant past must reawaken in the heart of the then Minister of War. Berthier, however, declared that he was content with the post which he then held, so the Court at Mitau suffered yet another disappointment. Finally an approach was made to Bonaparte himself—"the clumsy scoundrel," according to the Comte de Vaudreuil.‡ For the victor of Arcole, Louis XVIII. took the pains to write a personal letter, which obtained a reply which he regarded, to use his own words, as "insolent."§ Despite these repeated snubs, the Royalist continued to believe in the

* "Talleyrand sent Monsieur de Fontaines to Louis XVIII. in order to offer his services to the King. All that he asked as a reward was the duchy of Périgord and liberation from the restriction of his ecclesiastical office. The King was able readily to grant the first request. In respect of the second he replied that that was the Pope's affair. These negotiations were soon abandoned" (Pasquier, *Mémoires*, i., 248; see also Daudet, *Émigration*, ii., 403).

† Daudet, *Émigration*, ii., 29.

‡ Brifaut, *Souvenirs*, i., 143.

§ In the last few chapters of Daudet's *Histoire de l'Émigration* the reader will find a highly interesting dissertation upon the reason of these various attempts.

unchanging devotion of the King's subjects and his imminent restoration. We can to a certain degree understand that the *émigrés*, who had long lived abroad, might have been deceived by these childish hopes; but why they were not undeceived by the Bourbons' agents in Paris it is truly difficult to explain.

It is true that after 1804 Louis XVIII. no longer possessed an official agency in Paris. After the *coup* of Brumaire, under the auspices and through the influence of the Comte d'Artois, a royalist Committee was formed, composed of valiant, loyal, but turbulent nobles, who amused themselves and gossiped, and kept on the move between London and Paris, spending their days in hiding, dining in the city, and scattering freely the guineas of English money which they continued to receive. The Duc de Coigny, Hyde de Neuville, and the renegade policeman Dupéron* undertook the organisation of this association, which was stupidly called the "English Committee"; they had their secret journal, *l'Invisible*—and a secretary, the Abbé Godard, so lacking in prudence that he distributed pamphlets of Royalist propaganda in the public streets. He was seen, tracked, and arrested, and the English Committee was no more. It was to him that the Duc d'Enghien alluded, when he wrote: "I know nothing whatever of all your talk of agencies. I regard them as a lot of fellows who simply want to make money, and are more mischievous than useful."†

The "Royal Council," the last in date of these Royalist agencies, and the most important, lasted until the dawn of the Empire. It was created by the King, and corresponded only with him;‡ the Abbé de Montesquiou-Fezensac, Royer-

* For Dupéron see the preface by Albert Savine to Desmarest's *Quinze Ans de haute Police* (Garnier, 1900), and "Profits de Conspirateurs en l'An VIII., Dupéron et la Conspiration anglaise," by H. Pauffin de Saint-Morel, *Revue de Paris*, November 15, 1919.

† Welschinger, *Le Duc d'Enghien*, 181.

‡ The Conseil Royale must have been working from Fructidor onward. In 1820 Royer-Collard, who was one of its founders, wrote: "For six years I was in constant peril of my life, the servant

Collard, Dambray, André Jourdan, Beugnot, Fiévée, and other eminent men; but after Brumaire it was, of course, not recognised, but tolerated, by the Consulat Government. It was as agents of the Pretender that its members were received, and made much of in the *salons* of the most celebrated hostesses where they met Government officials and even Ministers with whom they conversed discreetly concerning their mission and their hopes,* approaching, on occasion, even the Consuls themselves! The proof of this is that the Abbé de Montesquiou himself forwarded to Bonaparte and his colleague Lebrun letters addressed to them by the King his master. Unfortunately, he was so devotedly attached to the King that he did not dare to tell him the heart-rending truth. To Talleyrand, who asked how Bonaparte's brutal reply had been received at Mitau, the Abbé confessed: "It has not yet been sent. . . . Why add to the humiliations of our unfortunate sovereign? He will know soon enough as it is that you are unwilling to do anything for him."†

This is why the exiled King was so ill-informed even by his shrewdest agents, and when the rupture was final, after the execution of the Duc d'Enghien and the proclamation of the Empire—when it was certain that Bonaparte had no intention of playing the part of Monk—the Royalists persisted in their illusion; it was a stubborn malady of which they were unwilling to be cured, so seductive was it, and so intoxicating. This explains the credulity of the little Court of Mitau, which, weary of disappointments, persisted in its desire to be deluded, and this is why, at the time of the great deluge, when all its hopes were swept away, it welcomed, as though it had been the dove from a second Ark, the hoax devised by the odious Perlet, announcing that a sudden

---

of the King of France, and his diligent Councillor. . . . These relations commenced six months after the 18 Fructidor. . . . They finally came to an end about the middle of 1803. . . ." (Daudet, *Émigration*, ii., 273, note).

* E. Daudet (*Émigration*, ii., 43 *et seq.*) speaks of a very singular conversation between the Abbé de Montesquiou and Talleyrand, which took place in the *salon* of the Duchesse De Luynes.

† E. Daudet, *Émigration*, ii., 438.

change was at hand, and that the Usurper, apparently triumphant, had no longer a supporter nor a friend.

The repeated blows of misfortune, distance, and the impossibility of constant contact with France, absorption in the business of playing its part in spite of universal inattention, and, even more, the lying flatteries of the adventurers and the needy, enveloped Mitau in a sort of lethargy. When, in the early part of 1798, the Pretender, driven from Blankenburg at the request of the French Republic, received from the Tsar an invitation to establish himself at Courland, feared at first that acceptance from so remote a place of exile would have the look of a desertion. Nevertheless, as any other asylum was refused him, he accepted, much against his liking. In his letter of thanks he did not forget to insist on "the grief which this separation would cause his faithful and unfortunate subjects," who, as a matter of fact, with a few rare exceptions, did not even remember his existence. On March 13, after thirty-one days on the road, he arrived at Mitau. In those days it was a town of regular plan, but consisting of wooden houses, dominated by one of those enormous chateaux which the obsessive memory of Versailles induced a number of sovereigns, both great and small, to build during the eighteenth century. It was a monumental residence, not wholly devoid of splendour, truly worthy, to all appearances, to shelter the exile of the most august monarchy in the world. Copses interspersed with sheets of water formed a park, which did its best to hide the pale expanse of sandhills that blended on the horizon with the grey line of the Gulf of Riga. Unfortunately this noble if melancholy background incited the inmate to organise a Court, and the material was not lacking. Although, with the exception of the great reception rooms, the château was entirely unfurnished, "no beds, no sofas, no linen, nothing of all that which is indispensable in even the meanest of households,"* the Court was installed

* *Mémoires tirés du Journal de M. le vicomte d'H——, aide-de-camp du Roi, sur l'émigration française et sur les circonstances de l'exil de S.M. Louis XVIII. Mémoires secrets et inédits pour servir à l'Histoire contemporaine,* by A. de Beauchamp, Tome, ii., 148.

in an economical fashion, but one by which etiquette was satisfied. In this vast palace, the attempt was made to reproduce Versailles and the Tuileries, although the sole source of supplies was the Tsar, a madman whose munificence was intermittent. For example, he conceived the delicate attention of forming a detachment of a hundred ex-members of the King's bodyguard, men of noble birth, who had formed part of Condé's cavalry, and whom he sent to Mitau in wagons in order that the Pretender should be received on alighting from his coach with royal honours. But the Tsar had neglected to give any orders for this improvised and military household, so that the royal bodyguard, famished and in rags, reduced to living on the alms of the inhabitants of Mitau, were billeted in an absolutely empty house, where there was not even a truss of straw.

Nevertheless, when it had had time to set itself in order, and after the arrival of the Queen, who until then had remained in Bohemia, and of Mme. Royale, the daughter of Louis XVI., interned in Vienna since her liberation from the Temple, the Court of Mitau succeeded in keeping up appearances. The King had his "household": a grand almoner, almoners in ordinary, gentlemen of the chamber, *aides-de-camp*. . . . The Queen and Mme. ——, who was married forthwith to her cousin the Duc d'Angoulême—were provided with a maid-of-honour, a lady-in-waiting, and a gentleman-in-waiting. Nearly three hundred persons of French blood were now living in the châteaux of the Dukes of Courland, and now that they were there, after so many vicissitudes, so many forced removals, in a sort of oasis which favoured the growth of illusions, they hoped that nothing would happen to disturb their tranquillity, and they feared above all the bearers of bad news. To be sure, their material profit was slight as was their actual income, while their uniforms and liveries were patched and darned; their table was poorly furnished, and their want of money acute, for the King, who himself held the strings of his purse, was anything but generous in his distribution of the two hundred thousand roubles which the Tsar placed at his disposal—at

very irregular intervals; but as this poverty was general and no one suffered by comparison with his fellows, each accepted his share, hoping for better things in the near future. This mood of resignation gave rise to a sort of indolence which was still further aggravated by their distance from France, and it is easy to understand that, living this self-centred life, cut off from the rest of the world, in a soporific climate, these shipwrecked survivors of the Revolution abandoned themselves to all those dreams that might bring a little pleasure into their drowsy existence.

Travellers, those whom an active life kept wide awake, and whom duty, chance, or mere curiosity led to Mitau, took away with them the most dismal impressions of this phantom Versailles, which lay under a spell like that which was placed on the palace of the Sleeping Beauty. The Prince de La Trémoille, the temporary head of the Royalist agency, who, having escaped from the witches' cauldron of Paris, went to Mitau in the hope of their recovering his ardour, left the place, "disheartened to the point of disgust," and horrified at having found there nothing but a set of drowsy fossils wilfully deaf to all that might wake them from their dream.* The young Duchess Dorothée de Biren, the future Duchesse de Dino, whose father had reigned over Courland, was allowed, while still little more than a child, but already endowed with unusual penetration, to present her homage to the Bourbons of France, now living in the castle which had been the possession of her ancestors. There she was presented to the "Queen," who frightened her: "I had never seen an uglier woman, nor a dirtier one. Her grey hair, cut so that it bristled like a hedgehog, was concealed by an unbecoming straw hat, which was all in tatters. Her face was long, thin, and yellow; her body, short and corpulent, supported, I know not how, a dirty petticoat, above which floated a small mantle of taffetas, all in rags. The Duc d'Angoulême was absorbed in the mass, vespers, salvation, and hunting; the Duc de Grammont

* *Souvenirs de la Révolution, Mes Parents*, by le Duc de la Trémoille, 54 *et seq.*

was always in search of a good dinner; M. d'Agoult was always dancing attendance upon Madame Choisy. . . ."* Little Dorothée formed the opinion that "if one had not been blinded by the necessity of feeling interested by persons who had suffered such misfortunes," one would have formed a very unfavourable idea of the exiles who had taken refuge on the territory of her forebears. About the same time—that is, in the early part of 1807—the Tsar Alexander consented, at the urgent request of Louis XVIII., to interrupt his journey at Mitau, through which he was passing on the way to join his army. The exiles had resolved to dazzle this powerful ally, to whom they owed so much; at the posting-house he found the Duc d'Angoulême, who had come to pay his respects; at the foot of the stairs of the château itself the Comte d'Avaray awaited him, and led him to the great *salon*, which was furnished in blue cashmir with a trimming of yellow cashmir.† There he found the "King of France," prevented by the gout or by etiquette to go forward to meet the Tsar. The two sovereigns embraced one another, and went forward to the King's study, where they remained close upon an hour, after which the Tsar devoted a few moments to the Duchess and the Duc d'Angoulême. He left Mitau the same evening. Louis XVIII. was greatly elated by this interview; as for the Tsar, shocked by the pretentiousness and the ill-concealed poverty of the King, and by the appearance of his gouty and corpulent person, and his embarrassing loquacity, he left Mitau determined "to leave the Bourbons to their own devices, and to give no support to any of their schemes," thoroughly persuaded "that the Pretender, a relic of bygone majesty," was a person of indifferent capacity who would never sit upon a throne.‡

Just as the obstinate optimism of the French at Mitau

* *Souvenirs*, the Duchesse de Dino, quoted by Gilbert Stenger, *Grandes Dames du XIX^e^ siècle*, 431.

† *Archives des Affaires étrangères*, Fonds Bourbon, 604.

‡ Daudet, *Émigration*, iii., 407, 408. Register of 615 of the Fonds Bourbon in the *Archives des Affaires étrangères* contains a record of the visit of the Tsar to Mitau.

persisted in seeing vistas of unclouded azure in the pitiless gloom of the heavens that concealed their destinies, so custom blinded their eyes to the pitiful nature of their paste-board Court and its imitation of the dignity that attaches to sovereign power. Strangers found this affectation almost unseemly—the bodyguard, armed from head to foot for the defence of this impotent monarch who never left his rooms, and whom no one dreamed of attacking; the idleness of all these gentlemen of noble birth busied about mere nothings and imbued with the sense of their own importance; the obedience to an etiquette already out of date and stripped of all the graces that formerly rendered it supportable, offended them as a childish waste of time. And yet, in the midst of a continent submerged by the rising tide of a Revolutionary ideal, there was a certain majesty, a certain dignity, in the idea that the descendant of seventy kings should gather about him, on this species of desert island that lay upon the confines of the civilised world, the melancholy waifs of the shipwreck in which the old world foundered. He had surrounded himself, as though he had been a symbol of this perished world, with the survivors, majestic or humble, of the regicidal tragedies: the daughter of Louis XVI., the Abbé Edgeworth, the priest who accompanied the royal victim to the scaffold; Hue and Cléry, the last of his servants to serve him, and even poor Turgy, the pantry-boy at the Temple, at a time when all the sovereigns of Europe hastened to kneel before Bonaparte—since they could not for the moment overthrow him—it was a fine sight to behold the noblest of all reduced to mendicity, meeting the storm unafraid, and refusing to bow his head. His indomitable confidence in his imprescriptible rights was a reproach to some, a cause of remorse in others, and a lesson for all; even persons in no way concerned were impressed by it. One of Napoleon's officers, carrying dispatches to St. Petersburg and travelling at express speed, was passing through a small Russian town one evening in August, 1807. Having to change horses, he entered the inn, where he was amazed to find that everyone was speaking

French; moreover, most of the men there wore a red ribbon in their button-holes. "What is that?" he enquired; "the Legion of Honour?"—"No, the Order of St. Louis." "But what's the name of this town?"—"Mitau. This is France —Old France." Having returned to his post-chaise, which once more set off at breakneck speed, the Emperor's courier, leaning forward, saw, rising above the roofs of the town, the long majestic façade, all lit up, of the château that sheltered exiled royalty. This passing glance left in his mind an impression that unconsciously haunted him. This officer of Napoleon's army was to become, ten years later, a gentleman of the King's bedchamber to Louis XVIII., then installed in the Tuileries.* Many others were haunted in similar fashion: and that great uprooter of tradition, Napoleon, who shook and ruled the world, was himself thus obsessed, at the apogee of his glorious career. He knew well enough that "ten centuries of history could not be effaced by the events of ten years,"† and at moments when his conscience plagued him he was dogged by the idea that the restoration of the Bourbons was inevitable. "I am almost inclined to believe," says Pasquier, "that it flattered his pride to think that he could not be replaced by any but this august dynasty."‡ It irked him to think that there was in the depths of Courland a rival, without a gun, without a soldier, who was yet more powerful than he because of the principle which this exile represented. "If only I were my own grandson," he used to murmur, mournfully considering his own ephemeral achievements. To rid himself of this nightmare he tried to "buy" from the exile his indelible prerogative. He found a Prussian who was absurd enough to convey the proposal to Louis. The exile's reply was magnificent: "Bonaparte is mistaken if he thinks he can induce me to traffic in my rights. . . . He himself would establish them if they could possibly be in dispute by

* *Mémoires*, General Comte de Saint-Chamans, ex-aide-de-camp of Marshal Soult, 81.

† Pasquier, *Mémoires*, i., 234.

‡ *Idem*, ii., 139.

the advances which he is now making." And as the Prussian insisted, suggesting that by this proud refusal the King might risk the loss of the subsidies which he received from Russia, whose fate was already in the balance, Louis XVIII. retorted: "I have no fear of poverty. If it were necessary, I would live on black bread with my children and my servitors. . . ." This was not said for effect; not long before this, in the lamentable exodus from Warsaw, the royal family, at the end of its resources, was compelled to sell its movable property and to pawn the diamonds of the daughter of Louis XVI. In such extremities the wandering exile spoke no less cheerfully of his crown, his sceptre, his throne, and his faithful subjects; and this obstinate confidence, which was merely increased by all the catastrophes which should have destroyed it, explains the tenacious credulity of the King and those about him in respect of the invariably favourable reports of his agents and the Machiavellian lies of his adversaries. Ingenuousness and blindness are among the most valuable endowments of faith.

Thus, without a shadow of suspicion, from the early part of the year 1806, that correspondence was commenced, of whose origin and development we have already spoken, between Mitau and the police-spies of Paris. Perlet's letters were addressed to Fauche-Borel, who was then living in London; Fauche-Borel sent a copy of each to his brother François, who had retired to Copenhagen after the invasion of Prussia by the French armies, which ended in their occupation of Courlande. This correspondence, as the reader may perhaps remember, was, in the first place, a trap set by the subtle police-agent, Desmarest, who wanted to entice Fauche-Borel to return to France: for the sake of the example, the bookseller must himself undergo the deserved punishment of his felonious behaviour; hence the invention of that bogus "Royal Committee," consisting of persons as eminent as they were imaginary, and the incessant reminder that "someone," possessing the absolute confidence of the august exile of Mitau, must come in person

to concert with them. Such, in the first place, was the trap so cleverly set; but the readiness with which the two brothers Fauche, d'Avaray, and the King himself swallowed this carefully devised hoax had encouraged the police to take yet bolder measures: and they obtained, thanks to this stratagem of theirs, valuable information as to the policy of the emigrants; on the pretext that the Committee must be kept constantly informed in respect of anything that might interest it, Perlet advised his dear Fauche "to hide nothing from him"; and whether it was that Desmarest found it amusing to pay his police with the money provided by the British Government, or that Perlet had determined to restore his fortunes which were shattered at the time of the Fructidorian *coup*, he hinted to his correspondent that money was needed to pay the price of certain subordinate assistants, and that a sum of half a million francs would be of the greatest assistance in hastening on the date of a "happy ending" of the Bourbon romance. But the essential point, on which the greatest stress was laid, was the dispatch to Paris of a confidential agent who would be instructed to place himself in direct touch with the Committee. This demand for money aroused a certain amount of suspicion; the British Government, having already spent thousands of millions of francs, had nevertheless been unable to get the better of Bonaparte, and felt that this request for half a million of francs was a very paltry demand. If they had been required to furnish some millions of pounds sterling, their confidence in Perlet's Committee would have been assured. But half a million francs!—What result would arise from such a miserable sum? Fauche had perforce to explain to Perlet that the modesty of his demands would produce a bad effect, and that he would make a great mistake if he felt at all awkward in making such demands: "The half million francs and all the money that an undertaking of this kind would necessitate will always be at your disposal," he wrote;* but before loosing its purse-strings the British Government would require an indis-

* *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6468, November 21, 1806.

putable proof of the influence of Perlet's Committee and its co-operation with Fouché's police: and this proof must consist of two blank passports, correct in every detail, and signed by Fouché. One of these passports would be sent to *Fietta* (Louis XVIII.), and the other, by way of Holland, to a London bookseller, who would forward it to Fauche-Borel: this second passport would be used by the confidential agent who would undertake the journey from Paris in order there to get in touch with the Royalist Committee. Perlet was unable to satisfy this requirement; Desmarest was doubtless unwilling to grant the "confidential agent," whose arrival he was impatiently expecting, the protection of a passport signed by the Ministry of Police. Louis XVIII. was responsible for the idea that Perlet's credit would be sufficiently established if he were to send, instead of the two passports, a list of the Royalists then imprisoned in the Temple. The police forwarded a copy of the jailers' register, and this exploit proved superabundantly that this excellent man had full control over the weather of the French capital, and that the Committee, whose instrument he was, made use of the administrative departments to work his will.

Now there remained only the business of selecting the confidential agent who would be the first to enjoy the honour of negotiating with the members of the Committee. Fauche-Borel, as we may imagine, was most unwilling to surrender to another the profits of the situation; moreover, he felt that he was the only person capable of appreciating, as a man experienced in important affairs, the significance of the movement then being planned, the persons who would be involved in it, their resources and their schemes, and "of kindling their zeal and estimating the sums of money required for their secret expenditure."* For that matter, it was he, Fauche-Borel, whom the Committee wished to meet, and Perlet laid great stress upon this point, urging Fauche to set out upon his journey for the good of the "cause." But Fauche had been somewhat chilled by the

* Fauche-Borel, *Mémoires*, iii., 334-5.

admonition of the Comte d'Antraigues, a notable expert in political intrigue, and convinced that the "Perlet affair" was a dangerous hoax;* Lord Howick himself, Secretary of State in the Foreign Office, either because he found Fauche's pretensions excessive, or because he had not much confidence in him, warned him against the possibility of an ambush or a trap, and would have preferred to send one of his own countrymen to Paris. Fauche, who had not forgotten the trick which he had played Desmarest, and realised that he would be running a serious risk if he were to defy the policemen on his own ground, resigned himself, without much difficulty, to surrendering the mission to another; but as he foresaw that it would be immensely profitable and would be upon everybody's lips, he absolutely insisted that it should be confided to some member of his own family, and he recommended to the Foreign Office his nephew Charles Vitel, who had recently arrived in London.

He was the younger of two brothers; it was he who, thirteen years earlier, at Geneva, escaped from his parents' house one day during the Terror, in order to hasten to the spot where his father had just been put to death; the child had to be dragged away from the place of execution, as we saw at the beginning of this narrative. Charles was now twenty-seven years of age: a tall young man, with delicate features, luminous eyes, chestnut hair, and an expression that was at once mournful and slightly feminine. At the age of eighteen he had enlisted in the British army, and now, in December, 1806, had lately returned from a campaign in India, where he served, in the quality of ensign, under Sir Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington. Fauche-Borel had introduced his nephew to all those acquaintances whose esteem he believed he had won. The young man

* This had always been the opinion of the Comte de Puisaye, who wrote to d'Antraigues in October, 1807: "More than ever I persist in my belief that this is a second volume of the Mehée de la Touche affair. This does not necessarily mean that Fauche is acting in bad faith; but he is deluded." (*Archives des Affaires étrangères*, Fonds Bourbon, 641).

made a good impression, thanks to his distinguished bearing, his pleasing manners, and his candid expression. When he declared that he was ready to set out for Paris, Lord Howick reminded him of the dangers of the undertaking, but Charles insisted, alleging that he would find the matter less difficult than another; he was acquainted with Perlet, having met him in London in 1800, when he had just returned from Cayenne; and in one hour's conversation with this wonderful man he would obtain the names of the senators and marshals composing the Committee, would call upon those whose support would be of the greatest value, and would return post-haste to England. He would thus make no continuing stay in Paris; moreover, he would be furnished with a passport correctly made out. This he would obtain at Neuchâtel, which he intended to visit on the way to Paris, being eager to embrace his mother, brother, and sister, whom he had not seen for eight years. Under these conditions the risks of the undertaking were reduced to their minimum, the more so as the worthy and valiant Perlet would extend to the young envoy his powers of protection and those of the influential officers of State whom he had won over to the Royalist cause.

Amongst these high officers of the State, we must not forget that Fauche-Borel, interpreting Perlet's greater reticence, included Fouché, the Minister of Police; for Fouché was plainly the highly-placed personage referred to in the correspondence signed by the pseudonym of Maradan. Perlet had always refrained from expressing himself plainly in this respect: but now, since an emissary was about to be dispatched, plain-speaking had become a necessity. Lord Howick explained to Charles Vitel the extreme significance attaching, in the eyes of the British Cabinet, to the assistance of Fouché. "If he is one of the members of the Committee, we shall have the utmost confidence in the approaching negotiations." Thus Lord Howick to Vitel. Suddenly Fauche-Borel, as a proof of his zeal, decided to write Fouché a letter, which Vitel would take to Paris, and would present in person to the Minister of Police, should

he succeed in obtaining a personal interview. This letter was conceived in the following words:

"Having to convey a communication of the greatest importance to Your Excellency, I may have need, for that purpose, of two blank passports for two persons whom the Government of His Britannic Majesty wishes to send to you: one for me, in my name, and bearing my description; the other should be blank for a confidential agent who will accompany me when I wait upon Your Excellency in order to discuss *an important object* of the greatest significance to the safety of the State and the personal existence of the Minister. If the Minister should wish to dispatch an agent in whom he has absolute confidence, the said agent will be enabled to undertake the preliminaries of negotiations which, as Your Excellency will perceive, will leave nothing to be desired. In conclusion, while begging the Minister to send my nephew back to England by the secret route followed by the fishermen, I propose to establish at once, and to follow this route, an express post, the secrecy of which will be impenetrable, so that the *émigrés* and the agents of the Princes will not suspect its existence.—FAUCHE-BOREL."*

As a precaution this letter, written on the thinnest of paper, was slipped into the bamboo which served Vitel as a walking-stick. It was impressed upon him that this letter was to be given only to Fouché in person. Thus, well provided with money, and full of happy anticipations at the lieutenant's commission which Lord Howick had promised him as a reward,† and eager to enter, in such romantic circumstances, that Paris which he had never seen, Charles Vitel left London on January 6, 1807,‡ in all unconsciousness, thrust forward by his uncle to the brink of that terrible lair of the Imperial Police, in which, if Perlet spoke truth, he would find persons eager to facilitate his task, and to forewarn him of any danger.

* *Archives nationales*, AF^{IV} 1499; *Bulletin de Police*, March 4, 1807.
† *Idem.* ‡ *Idem.*

CHARLES VITEL

In the uniform of an Ensign in the British Army.

To face p. 147.

CHAPTER V

CHARLES VITEL

Vitel landed at Hamburg, furnished with a Danish passport, by means of which he was able to obtain a passport for Neuchâtel. He crossed Germany without mishap, and about February 1 was safe in the bosom of his family. He spent ten days at Neuchâtel, and he wrote thence to Perlet to advise him of his coming visit to Paris.

This letter was a disappointment to Perlet: it was Fauche-Borel whom he had hoped to hand over to Desmarest. He was, indeed, greatly perplexed, for this young Vitel, who was coming to Paris, entrusted with a perfectly definite mission, would probably be far less easy to delude than his uncle the bookseller; he would want exact information, and how were his questions to be evaded ? By what fresh subterfuge could they escape the necessity of revealing to him the names of the members of a non-existent Committee ? And if Perlet should refuse to answer his question, what reason could he evoke to explain his silence without arousing the suspicions of his English victims, and endangering the correspondence just at the moment when it was promising to become profitable ?

Perlet confessed his perplexity to his friend and master Veyrat. The Inspector-General of the Police had his failings; but he was a man of resource, endowed with a sort of genius in respect of his profession, and having at his disposal a thousand shifts and expedients, as varied as they were ingenious. He looked into the question, and decided that in order to extricate themselves from this very ticklish situation, it would suffice to place Perlet in a position which would prevent him from replying to Vitel's questions, although it would enable him to encourage the young man

to speak, and perhaps to divulge information of value. He conceived the idea of sending Perlet to prison for a few days, under the pretext of unpaid debts; and during this fictitious imprisonment Veyrat would undertake to keep an eye on Vitel and to make sure that he did not lose patience.

Charles Vitel reached Paris, travelling straight from Neuchâtel, on February 21, and put up at the Hôtel d'Hambourg, kept by Paguest, in the Rue de Grenelle-Saint-Honoré,* not far from the Palais Royale. On the following day, keeping twenty louis d'or in his pocket, he took a letter of credit for 180 pounds sterling to Hottinger's Bank in the Rue de Sentier; so that he had at his disposal 200 pounds sterling, or about 2,000 francs.† Having completed this transaction, he made his way to the Rue de Saint-Tournon, where Perlet lived; Mme. Perlet was alone in the house—why, we know—and it was she who received the visitor, who introduced himself as a bookseller who had called to discuss with Perlet a work entitled *Les Oiseaux de Paradis*. This was the "pass-word." Mme. Perlet announced that her husband was away from home. Vitel left his name and address and departed.

Towards evening Mme. Perlet made her way to the prison of Sainte-Pelagie, where Perlet had delivered himself up, and gave her husband the news of the afternoon's visitor. Perlet gave her a note which his servant Gallay was to take to Vitel early the following morning: the note containing a few lines inviting Fauche-Borel's nephew to call upon him at the earliest possible opportunity, but without mentioning his whereabouts. On February 24, at ten o'clock in the morning, Gallay went to the Hôtel d'Hambourg, and offered to escort Vitel to the house where Perlet was residing. Vitel agreed with alacrity, and set off with the servant, who was, it may incidentally be remarked, himself a police spy

* Now part of the Rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

† From Vitel's account-book (*Archives nationales*, F^7 6319[A]). The louis d'or of twenty-four francs was practically equivalent to the English pound. Vitel regarded them indifferently, reckoning simultaneously in pounds and louis d'or. On leaving London he had received £300 sterling (about 7,500 francs).

in the pay of the Prefecture.* They walked right across Paris, but when they came to the deserted purlieus of the Faubourg Saint-Victor, Vitel appeared uneasy, and asked where he was being taken. "To the prison of Sainte-Pélagie," was Gallay's reply; hearing which, Vitel became alarmed and declined to go further, complaining that he knew nothing whatever about Monsieur Perlet, that he had never had any dealings with him; that it was for no honest reason that the note contained no address. On which he turned upon his heel and made off with long strides toward the more reputable quarters of the city.

On the 26th Perlet sent Vitel a second note. The prisoner in Sainte-Pélagie informed "his young friend" that he had hoped to leave prison that very day, but his liberation was slightly delayed; stlil, Vitel could come to see him without the slightest fear on the score of safety: "All imaginable precautions had been taken, so that the police themselves would protect him."† The youthful officer made up his mind and went to the prison where Perlet was waiting for him; and the two men became mutually acquainted:‡ Perlet invited his visitor to go upstairs to his own room, and once there exhorted him "to tell all that he had been instructed to say, paying no attention to his whereabouts." Vitel, quite unsuspectingly, spoke of his crossing and his journey to Neuchâtel; he stated further that his orders were to return to England immediately; in short, as soon as Perlet could give him the "papers of instruction" which it was arranged the librarian should confide to him. Unfortunately Perlet was not free; he regretted it extremely, but he would not be free for another week; but while, during that period, he could "tell him nothing, do nothing," he

* *Le Moniteur* of May 18, 1816.—"Gallay," says Perlet, "was an Inspector of the Police; but he was a child of my rearing, who has always followed me, and for whom I found a post, and who was always devoted to me."

† Vitel's "Journal," in the *Archives nationales*, F^7 6319[A].

‡ "I made his acquaintance on the time of my crossing to England on returning from Cayenne" (Letter from Perlet and Veyrat, February 24, 1807).

himself questioned Vitel at great length as to the condition of the *émigrés*, and anything that he had been able to find out, in conversing with his uncle, as to the plans of the British Government; he spoke with warmth, devotion, and affection of the exiled King and the sacred cause of legitimacy; and he professed absolute obedience to the instructions of the English Cabinet . . . and the moment that he was alone he sent the Prefect of the Police a detailed account of all that he had learned. Every evening Veyrat slipped into the Temple, and obtained full details as to the confidential matters divulged. For the rest, Vitel was "kept on the string" by two police agents, who had orders not to cause him any uneasiness, and "in order to make certain whether he was the bearer of some secret message or had secret resources at his disposal, an occasion was found to prolong and multiply his interviews with Perlet."* And the interviews were, as a matter of fact, repeated again and again; we know this from his diary, in which the employment of his time is conscientiously recorded, and from the daily reports which Perlet submitted to his superior officers.

This diary is kept in an exercise-book and bound in parchment, and closed with a length of wide olive-green braid. On reading this laconic record one obtains the impression that the worthy Vitel was surprised by Perlet's delays and excuses:

27 *February*.—Went to S.-P. More questions. More assurances; but nothing new.

28.—Same as yesterday. Begs me not to fail to return to-morrow.

1 *March*.—Same as yesterday. He would tell me everything when he got out (of prison).

2 *and* 3 *March*.—Called as usual, assurances as usual, questions as usual. Nothing new up to the moment of leaving.

But despite the vague uneasiness and the shadow of suspicion which we note in these entries, Vitel in Perlet's com-

* *Archives nationales*, AF^{iv} 1499.

pany was absolutely unreserved; he believed all the hypocritical statements of the police spy; he saw in him a valiant soldier of the good cause; he placed himself at his mercy, told Perlet all he knew, all that he had heard in respect of the arrangements which the *émigrés* and the British Government had made on the strength of the famous Committee; he even betrayed the fact that he was carrying, in his walking-stick, a letter for the Minister of Police. "Honest men," a wise man once declared, "will always be deceived if they attempt to count upon the procedure of scoundrels and the various degrees of crime." But as far as that goes, why should Vitel have been on his guard? His uncle, Fauche-Borel, had advised him to trust his friend Perlet blindly: Perlet, that "wonderful man," that "faithful Royalist," the "saviour of France and of Europe." The British Cabinet, Lord Howick, King Louis himself, who surely were to be trusted, had dealings with him; Vitel was heir official delegate; had he exhibited too great a reserve, the would have been lacking in the performance of his duty and might have jeopardised the success of his mission. We may obtain a rough idea of his confidences from Perlet's daily letters to Veyrat:

"1 *March.*—. . . Lord Howick told Monsieur Vitel . . . that such of my writings as have been communicated to him seemed to him to be the only accounts admissible, the only reports on which full and absolute confidence could be placed, for he could see plainly that they were trustworthy. . . . It was this that decided the Ministry to send Monsieur Vitel to me, in order to discuss with me *and the persons whom he believes to make up my Committee*, the means of transferring the millions of francs necessary to the restoration of the King. . . . This money is all ready for dispatch to me, and is entirely at my disposal. . . . Monsieur Vitel has told me that the request for 500,000 francs which I had first made appeared altogether too paltry; but the receipt of my further letters removed any further suspicion. . . . If one could assure the British Ministry that Fouché came

into the scheme, it would then feel assured of its success, and would make the greatest pecuniary sacrifices. . . . I replied . . . that I certainly hoped that this would be possible, and that our Committee being composed of the most eminent men, I would refer the matter to them, and would tell him what he might expect. Vitel has the greatest confidence in me; not a day passes but he comes to see me. . . . I am still uncertain as to whether he has papers with him: if he has any it is impossible that they should escape us. I am convinced that he will hide nothing from me, and that we can do what we like with him."

"3 *March*.—I spent part of the morning with my gentleman. . . . The scheme agreed upon by the British Ministry and Russia is to place Louis XVIII. on the throne. Directly they are assured of the intentions of France they will send a fleet to convoy Louis XVIII., and will land him at the spot . . . indicated by the Committee."

You see from this the self-importance of the wretched writer, and the value which he sets on the invention of his Committee; already he sees the King of Mitau and the British Fleet falling, like poor Vitel, into the trap which he has set, and he glories in his scheme. The Prefect of Police is equally pleased with it, and Perlet receives, as a reward for his faithful service, a present of 20,000 francs. And he really has managed the whole thing very cleverly; he has managed to induce his victim to unbosom himself without arousing his suspicions, and without making a single confidence in return for so much effusiveness. He has not given Vitel a single name of the members of his pseudo-Committee, or, rather, he has given him the name of one man, one only, the name of his master and friend, Inspector-General Veyrat. And Veyrat he upholds as the firm support of this phantom Committee: as the powerful individual to whom all the Royalists owe the immunity which they enjoy. It is "thanks to the secret protection of Veyrat that Vitel has been neither watched nor molested," and Perlet conjures the ingenuous young man never to forget, should he ever be in

any difficulty, that he will find in Monsieur l'Inspecteur a providence ready to rescue him from any danger.

Veyrat was indeed watching over Vitel, not to safeguard him, but to prepare for his furtive departure. Fauche-Borel's nephew accepted Perlet's assurance that he was free and inviolable, when, in fact, he was already taken in a net from which he was never to extricate himself; his feeling of security was so great that, weary of Perlet's prudent temporising, he decided upon sudden action, and determined to present himself at the Ministry of the Police and request an interview with Fouché, in order to give him the letter concealed in his bamboo walking-stick. He decided to take this step on Tuesday, March 4, but the Prefect, informed by Perlet that the ensign was the bearer of a letter intended for Fouché, could not lose the opportunity of seizing this precious manuscript before it had fallen into the hands of the Minister. There had always been, if not an antagonism, at least a rivalry between the Ministry and the Prefecture. The Prefect, Dubois, cherished the hope of compromising the Minister by exhibiting the mysterious letter, which, since it was so carefully concealed in a walking-stick, must relate to some important intrigue. Consequently the time had come for Vitel's arrest, and on Tuesday, at six o'clock in the morning, as he lay still asleep in his room at the Hôtel d'Hambourg, there came a knocking upon his door. He arose, and opened. It was the police. He was seized and escorted forth from the hotel: he was placed in a cab and taken by two policemen to the Prefecture.* It was a sinister locality, at the end of a steep *cul-de-sac* known as the Rue de Jerusalem,† in memory—so it was said—of a refuge intended to give shelter to pilgrims returning from the Holy Land. There, hemmed in amidst the old buildings of the Palais de Justice, was the hotel of the Prefect, a decrepit dwelling-house, vast in size and of old luxurious;

* "4 March. The day I had determined on for delivering my despatch to Monsieur Fouché. I was arrested at six o'clock in the morning, and taken to the Préfecture of Police" (Charles Vitel, *Journal*).

† La Tinna, *Dictionnaire des Rues de Paris.*

and in its various wings and dependencies were installed the various departments which, as the need arose, had annexed the intermediate buildings. In this heterogeneous collection of tumble-down hovels, shored up with great timbers, pierced by winding corridors, where, owing to the uneven nature of the ground, one could not walk ten paces without coming upon a narrow staircase, steep as a ladder, swarmed a whole world of officials, amanuenses, police-agents, prisoners, detectives, spies, solicitors, etc., wandering from office to office, under ceilings fissured with age, which one dared not repair lest a general collapse should result.

The moral reputation of this enormous molehill was in keeping with its external aspect. Fauriel says: "It would be impossible to convey an exact impression of this lair, in which you will find all that you could imagine of all that is most hideous." There for ten years reigned Comte Dubois, "as a tyrant"; the Prefect of Police, "insolent, full of vanity;"* discredited, caring for nothing save retaining his post and increasing his fortune. His manners were undistinguished, almost vulgar; accustomed, even to insensibility, to every crime, every species of infamy, corrupted by incessant promiscuity with police-spies, informers and criminals, having long lost all respect for himself and his influential post, he cynically awarded himself a pension of 5,000 francs monthly, levied on the proceeds of farming out the tax on gambling-hells, etc., and presented the Comtesse, his wife—the daughter of an old serving-woman—an annual gratuity levied on the taxes on prostitution.† On occasion he set his hand to the vilest of tasks, and we have seen that he liked to inspect and even inspire the correspondence between Perlet and Fauche-Borel.

* Fauriel, *Les derniers Jours du Consulat*, 226-7. It should be noted that we do not in any way associate ourselves with the severe condemnation of Dubois by his victim or his successors, who were only too eager to find fault with him. His private life was honourable, and the Emperor would not have retained him so long in his service if the Prefect had been the man that Fauriel and Pasquier depicted.

† Pasquier, *Mémoires*, 408, 429, 458.

Some of his favoured assistants had terrible tales told of them: Veyrat, to begin with, before whom the whole Prefecture trembled, because he was believed to be the spy of the Emperor, who employed him, it was said, for "private investigations." Under his orders was Foudras, a former hatmaker of Lyons: his pupil, intelligent, pliable, sly and insinuating, who was one day to replace his master. The divisional head, Bertrand, "a man of massive build, and great shrewdness, almost blind and riddled with gout."* Entrusted with the task of examining suspected persons; he was the terror of prisoners; he had a way of making the most taciturn loquacious, by crushing their fingers in a sort of thumbscrew, which consisted chiefly of two small blocks of wood.† Nodier had Bertrand in mind when he wrote: "The precautions with which society has armed itself against crime are not a whit behind the expedients of crime itself in their violence and ferocity."‡ To confine ourselves merely to the persons who play a part in this narrative, we have yet to mention Inspector Pasques, a giant, whose mere appearance terrified his victims. Fouché had quite an affection for this valuable officer, who obtained confessions merely by squeezing in his hand—powerful as the jaws of a vice—the hand of an obstinate or taciturn prisoner.§

The ingenuous Vitel, plunged into this inferno, did not attempt to resist; at first, greatly perturbed and dejected,|| he attempted to put his captors off the scent, but before long he admitted that he was in the service of England, and had been sent by his uncle, Fauche-Borel, who wished to obtain a passport to Neuchâtel. But that very day, during his first examination, presided over by Bertrand and attended, it is believed, by the Prefect Dubois and Veyrat, he told

* Nodier, *Souvenirs de la Révolution*, ii., 19.

† At the trial of Moreau, Caudoudal and their accomplices, Picot spoke of the torture to which he had been subjected by the citizen Bertrand.

‡ Nodier, *loc. cit.*

§ Norvins, *Mémorial*, iii., 324.

|| *Bulletin de Police du 4 mars, 1807. Archives nationales*, AF^{i} 1499.

his deplorable story. Still persuaded, by his uncle's assertions and Perlet's insinuations, that the whole police force of the Empire was won over to the cause of Louis XVIII., he related how he had come to France to put himself in touch with the Royalist Committee—and here Dubois may well have smiled—and how Lord Howick, to whom he was presented before his departure from London, had instructed him to advise the same Committee of the dispatch of abundant funds and of the landing of the Pretender, at no very distant date, on the coast of France. Vitel was heard without interruption.

When he had finished, Bertrand sent for the bamboo stick which Vitel had left in his room at the Hôtel d'Hambourg; upon Perlet's insisting, Veyrat gave the order that the stick should be brought to the Prefecture. On seeing the walking-stick in Bertrand's hands, Vitel turned pale: "I am lost!" he murmured. Realising that henceforth all dissimulation was useless, he himself pointed out the knot in the bamboo stick under which his uncle's letter was to be found. The stick was sawn in two, the letter withdrawn and read. . . . Not without disappointment, for it was hoped that the letter would contain the proof that Fouché had sold him to the Royalists. The discovery of this trivial document concluded the examination.* Vitel

* Here we have followed an account given by Veyrat, an eye-witness of the examination (*Le Moniteur*, May 18, 1816). The police report of March 4, addressed to the Emperor, tells the tale differently. Vitel himself is said to have revealed the fact that in his walking-stick there was concealed a letter addressed to Fouché, of which he had spoken to no one, not even to Perlet. It seems highly improbable that the prisoner should, by this spontaneous confession, have aggravated his situation, and we may take it that the police report adopted this story in order to mitigate the odious character of the procedure of which Vitel was the victim. It is true that Perlet, in his letters to Veyrat while at Sainte-Pélagie, declares that "Vitel had assured him most positively that he had nothing to deliver to anybody whomsoever. . . ." But the police-spy's insistence upon this essential point is in itself suspicious. Moreover, a phrase of Vitel's, which occurs further on, seems to settle the question. He speaks of "the low scoundrels who make a game of deceit," which evidently refers to Perlet. Now, if he

could hope for no mercy from these ogres into whose power he had fallen, not one of whom reflected that the crime of which they were accusing the unhappy young man had actually been committed by themselves; for, like the spider, their police had secretly woven the web, knowing well that the victim would walk into it and be taken; and although the captive was not the victim for whom they had hoped, they were, while waiting for something better, well content, since the success of their plans gave them an opportunity of proving their vigilance and their devotion to their master.

Napoleon spent the whole month of March, 1807, at Osterode, in East Prussia, a thousand miles from Paris. The police report of March 4 was addressed to him, as happened every day; and Fouché was not the man to lose the opportunity of scarifying those enemies of his cause, who were too obtuse to realise that his devotion to the Emperor was unassailable. With regard to the passage relating to Vitel, he wrote indignantly, in his own hand: "That a wretched fellow like Fauche-Borel should contrive an intrigue with a view to making money, one can understand; but that the British Cabinet should be the dupe of such a tawdry fellow, that it should believe in the most sensational improbabilities, is really a most extraordinary thing. It amounts to positive infatuation.*

There was nothing more to be done save to wait the Emperor's orders, and that meant a month's delay.

attributed his arrest to Perlet's treachery, some patent and material fact, such as the seizure of the walking-stick, must at last have opened his eyes. It should also be noted that Pasquier, when he took possession of the Prefecture after the downfall of Dubois, examined the records of the *Affaire Vitel*, and gives his analysis of the case in his memoirs. He writes: "Vitel had concealed nothing from Perlet, and even went to the length of revealing that his instructions were contained in his walking-stick. When Perlet had wormed out of the young man all that he wanted to know, he had him arrested. . . ." For these reasons we do not feel compelled to accept the reports of the police, since these reports are always so worded as to give prominence to the professional exactitude, subtlety and probity of the police, as a whole, from the Minister down to the humblest subordinate.

* *Archives nationales*, AF^{iv} 1499.

Vitel was detained at the Prefecture so that he might be available when required; examined afresh on March 5 and 7, it would really seem as if as yet he did not realise any cause for anxiety. Still impressed by Perlet's audacious assertions, he persuaded himself, while thinking the matter over, that the police, and Dubois, and Bertrand, and above all Veyrat, were favourable to him, since they were secretly serving the same cause as himself, and he saw in his arrest merely an administrative precaution intended to protect him from the spite of the enemies of that Committee under whose banner they were enrolled. They may even have referred, in a jesting tone, to some involved intrigue of the kind, for otherwise it is difficult to understand how he could have been so simple as to appeal to Veyrat himself, begging him to smooth the way toward the accomplishment of his "mission."* We known that Perlet had boasted to him of Veyrat's great influence and his impeccable Royalism, and the poor ensign, anxious to acquit himself of his task and to return to London, was under the impression that he could not do better than to beg for the assistance of this all-powerful "protector." Veyrat replied by advising the prisoner "to draw up a written account describing the motives of his journey, taking special care to conceal nothing." Vitel accordingly wrote his general confession.† The poor young man's confidence in his executioners was pitiable; nothing could undeceive him; he did not seem to realise that such a thing as wickedness existed; and when Veyrat sent for him to inform him that the 400,000 francs on deposit in Hottinger's bank had been confiscated, and that he must find other resources, he was greatly distressed by the thought of imposing a sacrifice upon his mother, who was not wealthy. He wrote in his diary: "Restless all night, as it is useless to expect anything of my poor mother, and I know no one here who could help me at the present moment."

* Vitel, *Carnet-Journal*. "March 14. Wrote to Monsieur l'Inspecteur to ask him whether it would not be possible for me to accomplish my mission."

† "March 15, wrote a letter in the form of a memoir to Monsieur Veret" (*sic*). (Vitel, papers in the *Archives nationales*, F^7 6319^A.)

Three days later he was transferred to the Tower of the Temple, where he was received by Fauconnier, between whom and Vitel's family some old relationship existed.* Quite unable to understand why everybody should be incensed against him, he had thoughts of imploring Fouché to enable him to leave his prison, and in his diary he writes: " The twenty-fourth, wrote to his Excellency the Minister of Police." His request was granted. On the 27th, an Inspector, the terrible Pasques, called at the Temple to escort Vitel to the Quai Malaquais. At last, then, he would be able to explain himself, and on being put in touch with the Committee, would fulfil his mission and return to London. But he was not received by the Minister; he was taken to see a " secretary "—Desmarest probably—and we may take it that his reception disillusioned him for, having been returned on the same day, Vitel wrote no further entries in his diary. He seems to have lost all hope; he passed his time by scribbling on bits of paper, which are now to be found included in his *dossier*, melancholy thoughts, recollections of books read long ago, or passages taken from volumes lent him by Fauconnier: " I set before myself the ideal of never having injured anyone, and having always contributed to the happiness of the human race. . . ."—" I am no more afraid of ceasing to be than I was desirous of being "; or in order to divert his mind from the inextricable cruelty and wickedness of mankind, he began to write, in English, the narrative of his campaign in India. His accounts give him more trouble than anything, and he prudently strikes a balance: " Arrived in Paris with twenty louis in my pocket, and 120 with M. Hottinger, which makes in all 200 pounds sterling . . . credit balance on entering the Prefecture,

* " Prefecture of Police, March 20, 1807. The doorkeeper of the Temple prison will take over from Monsieur Bouchon, police officer, and detain in the above-mentioned establishment, the person hereinafter described, coming from the Prefecture: Vuitel (*sic*), Charles Samuel, 27, native of Neuchâtel in Switzerland, arrested in Paris, Rue de Grenelle Saint-Honoré, at the Hôtel d'Hambourg " (*Archives de la Préfecture de Police;* Jailers' register, No. 4, fo. 218).

384 francs, which are in the hands of M. l'Inspecteur. M. l'Inspecteur paid the innkeeper 82 francs 16 sous, and to the Prefecture 92 francs 2 sous; *idem* 32 francs 2 sous. This left in the hands of l'Inspecteur 209 francs 2 sous, plus 4,500 francs seized at Hottinger's."*

But these 4,500 francs were by no means in M. l'Inspecteur's hands: Perlet, doubtless considering that "his young man" would never need it again as a reward of his faithful service.† But he did not regard himself as sufficiently rewarded; he dreamed regretfully of the millions which England held at his disposal for the use of the Committee. Must he then renounce all hope of this magnificent reward? One thing was certain; Vitel's arrest, and all that was bound to follow thereon, would shortly set a term to the device so skilfully exploited during the past year: the British Ministry, Louis XVIII., and Fauche-Borel himself, would realise that they had been duped; and not only would Perlet be discredited in their eyes, but once his double-dealing and his hoax had been exposed things might very well occur which would cause him to repent of his activities. It was therefore essential to save the situation: but how? The imagination of scoundrels is infinitely fertile, and they are endowed with powers of inventive penetration extremely rare in law-abiding men. Perlet accordingly dispatched to Fauche-Borel the briefest of notes, but one which betrayed the deepest feeling, announcing that his nephew was in prison. "Vitel has been arrested," the informer wrote, "not in Paris, but on the way thither," and therefore beyond the Committee's radius of action. Thus, at the outset, he diverted the suspicion that a true relation of the facts might have aroused in Fauche's mind. In the same letter he implored Fauche to send him, with

* *Archives nationales*, F^7 6319 .

† "The Prefect of the Police confiscated this money only in order to pay it out in the shape of bonuses—namely, 3,600 francs to M. Perlet, and 574 francs to one Veyrat, Inspector of Police" (*Rapport au Roi*, November, 1814; minutes of evidence in the *Mémoire pour Louis Fauche-Borel*, at the end of the *Mémoires de Lombard de Langres*, ii., 241).

all possible haste, the sum of 600 pounds sterling (14,400 francs), the immediate receipt of that sum being indispensable if Vitel was to be extricated from the scrape into which he had clumsily blundered.* Three days later Perlet repeated his demand: he must have the money in order to " ransom " Vitel; thanks to the Committee, the young messenger would soon be free, and would return to London " furnished with the documents best fitted to increase the confidence of the British Cabinet " in the imminence of the Restoration. And again, three days later, he returns to the charge, so fearful is he lest the newspapers should mention the incident before he should grab the coveted sum. " If your money arrives in time I shall contrive to extricate Vitel, and to send him back to you with all the documents required: meanwhile be assured of my utmost zeal and devotion."† And, he added, as though he feared that his treachery might not even now be sufficient: " Some have sought to make me believe that M. Vitel was the bearer of something extremely secret. Tell me the truth frankly,"‡ hoping thus to aggravate by some fresh accusation the charge hanging over the head of the prisoner in the Temple. Not a word, as we see, of the circumstances of Vitel's arrest, of the prison in which Vitel was confined, of the serious nature of the accusation brought against him, or of the tribunal before which he would have to appear. It was important continually to give Fauche-Borel fresh cause for anxiety, in order to obtain money from him; but it was also important to keep him in a state of suspense, as certainty might well diminish his generosity. Fauche obtained the 14,000 francs and sent it to Paris with all possible dispatch;§ so that the Vitel affair yielded Perlet 20,000 francs in a period of three months, to say nothing of the esteem of Comte Dubois, the

* The letter is dated March 21 (*Rapport au Roi, loc. cit.*)

† *Mémoires pour Louis Fauche-Borel,* by Lombard de Langres.

‡ *Idem.*

§ The sum of 600 francs demanded by Perlet was sent by Cazenove, the London banker, to Pichouat, his Paris agent. It was paid over to Perlet in June and August, 1807 (*Mémoires pour Louis Fauche-Borel,* by Lombard de Langres).

Prefect of Police, who, some months later, rewarded his faithful servant with the post of a clerk in the Government offices in the Rue de Jerusalem, at a salary of a 400 francs per month. There was no need to linger over the "Vitel affair"; it had yielded more than anyone had ventured to hope.

And there was indeed no lingering;* on the morning of April 4 two police-agents, Chefdeville and Tavernier, proceeded to the Temple in order to take delivery of Charles Vitel and "dig him out" from the State prison. While giving Fauconnier a receipt for his prisoner, they pronounced "that he would not be returned." Vitel was taken to the hotel in the Rue de Cherche-Midi, in which courts-martial were held, and was there summoned to appear before a military commission. His guilt was proved in advance, and the proceedings of the Court were quickly dispatched; the unfortunate young man confined himself to appealing to the indulgence of his judges, who sentenced him to death, without appeal or delay.† Transferred immediately to the military prison of the Abbaye, he wrote "five or six letters," which were entrusted to the Governor of Paris. Only two of these letters are known to survive, and they are worth reproducing:

"My dearest Mother, Brother, and Sister,

"Your Charles is bidding you farewell; you must reconcile yourselves to losing him; in a few hours from now he will be happier than you, and, if on leaving this life, he has one regret, it is, God knows, that I am compelled to leave you here without a chance of benefiting you. Be

* The Emperor writes to Fouché: "Osterode, 24 March, 1807. I am in receipt of your letter. I have approved a decree to the effect that this wretched agent of Fauche-Borel's shall be sent before a court-martial and shot" (*Correspondence*, iv., 410).

† Police report of April 6, 1607: "The Military police tried yesterday a spy, one Charles Vitel, a native of Neuchâtel, nephew of Fauche-Borel. The confession of the accused, concerning the mission in London with which he was entrusted, left no doubt as to his guilt. He confined himself to appealing to the indulgence of his judges" (*Archives nationales*, AF^{iv} 1499).

happy, if it is still possible; think of me sometimes, and, above all, do not allow yourselves to be prostrated by grief. Think of it—to have left you for eight years, and then to have returned, to have seen you once more, and now to have left you for ever! More fortunate than you, I am about to see your father once more. . . . Do not be afraid, I shall know how to die as he died. . . . Farewell! I have only a moment longer to live, and I am forced to leave you. The thought of a mother, a brother, a sister in tears touches my heart; but you must submit to this last trial, and summon up your strength to endure it; for it is a terrible ordeal. Once more, farewell. Kiss for me all our friends and relations who will be affected by my fate; since I have never had an enemy I have nothing to forgive, but I implore forgiveness of those whom I may have offended; as for the persons who sent me hither, I acquit them absolutely of my death; they knew nothing of the danger, deceived by vile scoundrels who make a game of imposture, whose victim I am. . . . Adieu, my dear ones. . . .

"CHARLES SAMUEL VITEL.

"From the Abbaye, *April* 4, 1807."

The second letter was written to his cousin, Auguste Borel. It contained the first letter which Auguste was charged to give Mme. Vitel.

"MY DÉAR FRIEND,

"If the 20 louis of my mother's have not been sent, I beg you not to send them, but to return them; read the enclosed, and you will learn the reason why my poor mother will not be put to this expense. Console her, my dear friend, since I cannot do so save by distressing her; help her to bear this fresh misfortune, and believe that your cousin will be as grateful to you in the next world, as in the little time left him in this. . . . Farewell; in an hour, in two at most, your cousin will have joined his father.

"CHARLES SAMUEL VITEL.

"At the Abbaye, *April* 4, 1807."

"I am now about to dine; there is quite a crowd under the window, staring at the victim, who is being made ready to entertain them; I need hardly inform you that I have never yet been present at an entertainment of this kind, but we are always learning something new; though to-morrow I shall no longer be in a state to learn anything! I remember an English captain said to me in India: 'Poor Vitel, you will never be happy in this world, you are too good.' I don't know if the second part of his prediction was true, but I do know that the first is now not far from being accomplished. . . . But my mother, my sister, my brother! I am forced to leave you without having done anything for you. . . . I am now on the point of leaving this world; a few moments and I shall no longer be; console my mother; the thought of her is the only grief that I feel at this critical moment. Farewell, farewell!—V."

These few moments, the most painful of all, were, alas! long drawn out. Vitel knew nothing of Paris; nothing of the deliberation of the last formalities, or the length of the journey from the Abbaye prison, which stood where the Rue de Bucy turns into the Rue du Four to the Plaine de Grenelle, where military executions took place. The inhabitants of the Saint-Germain district were accustomed to the spectacle of a cab and a squadron of mounted troopers drawn up in front of the prison, close to the porch, with its triangular pediment, which formed one of the few ornaments of the old, squat grey building, flanked by flat-topped turrets at each of its corners. They knew that this meant that a prisoner, condemned to death, was leaving for the "Barrière," and they crowded into the narrow street in order to watch his departure. The women of the Saint-Germain market, in particular, delighted in these moving spectacles; they left their wares and crowded round the carriage in order to appraise the bearing of the victim. As always happens in a Parisian crowd, there were some present who knew everything, and were eager to relate in detail all that was happening inside the prison, and to comment on

the circumstances of the crime and the trial. On this particular occasion they knew that " it was an Englishman," a spy; and they were now binding him before putting him in the cab. Such, in fact, was the custom; but when at the appointed hour the jailers entered Vitel's cell, and he saw the cord intended to bind him in the hands of one of their number, he drew back, startled, believing that they were about to strangle him. Realising that it was merely a matter of binding his hands, he begged that he might retain his liberty—a favour which was granted. He drank a last glass of wine, and was ready.

The sky, which during the morning had been bright and clear, was now overcast; a sudden storm of sleet and snow was passing over Paris; it was bitterly cold.* In the small open place before the prison, the troopers were now in the saddle with their sabres unsheathed. The doors of the prison opened; the condemned man appeared; and there was a sudden murmur of compassion. How young he was! The women found it easy to pity him. The little procession set out upon its journey, turning into the narrow, winding Rue du Four, and, crossing the Place de la Croix Rouge, it entered the interminable Rue de Grenelle, flanked by its almost unbroken ranks of aristocratic hotels with their lofty gateways. Many an old house is still standing there whose inmates leant out of their windows to watch the carriage go by with its escort of mounted men. But they knew as little as we of the mute, piercing anguish of the wretched man whose face was dimly seen in the depths of the carriage. Had he at last guessed something of the nature of that vile conspiracy to whose success he was being sacrificed? It is most improbable; he went to his death without knowing what he was dying for. In this city of Paris, famed for its beauty and its amenities, he had dealings only with monsters; the only human beings whose acquaintance he made there were the traitor, three policemen, two prison warders, a merciless tribunal, and Fouché's torturer. No one can imagine the horrible and bewildered nightmare which must

* *Bulletin de l'Observatoire*, April 4, 1807.

have filled his mind as a result of falling into this slough of hideous treachery, while his gaze wandered, unseeing, over the noble façade of the Invalides, which he was now leaving behind him on his left before plunging obliquely into the Rue des École Militaires, lined with beer-gardens and pastry-cooks' shops, and open-air cafés where soldiers sat drinking, for it was a Sunday. Then came the long-pillared porticoes of the École Militaire; and then the little procession turned off to the right, down a road without houses,* which led to the ill-matched buildings of the old Château de Grenelle. Suddenly two guard-houses were seen, squat and sinister, reminding one of monumental masonry: this was the "Barrière." Yet another turn to the right, and the cab stops; and here are soldiers and inquisitive onlookers, and a long, empty avenue skirting a high wall, seemingly endless; and now the condemned man is led forth; a firing-squad, after taking a few steps forward on the threadbare grass, stands in readiness for its task; an officer steps aside, holding a paper, and mumbles the words of the sentence; then the unhappy victim is placed against the wall; those near him step aside; an order is given, and a volley is heard; a human body leaps in the air and writhes upon the ground in a final spasm, and is straightway borne to the Vaugirard† cemetery. Such was a military tribunal at the Barrière de Grenelle, and such was the end of Charles Vitel, on that gloomy freezing afternoon of spring. Nevertheless, Perlet can hardly have slept soundly that night.

One would imagine that when Fauche-Borel, about April 20, learned of his nephew's death from the account in the Parisian newspapers,‡ his faith in the power and influence of the Secret Committee must have been rudely

* The present Rue Dupleix.

† For the place set aside for executions the quickly-fulfilled formalities, see *Grenelle*, by Lucien Lambeau, *passim*.

‡ The *Moniteur* of April 7 mentions Vitel's condemnation and execution. The *Journal de l'Empire* of April 8 reproduces the text of the sentence, and announced the execution with a few lines of comment as to the attitude of the brothers Fauche.

shaken. Nothing of the sort. Fauche was one of those deluded persons who cherish their delusions, and will not be undeceived. Moreover, Perlet's explanation, though audacious, was quite acceptable. "He never saw Vitel, who was arrested before he succeeded in reaching Paris, as the result of information which very probably came from London. If only he could have conferred with the young man, could have advised him and introduced him to the Committee, the deplorable misfortune would have been averted." But Vitel, the moment he was captured, "lost his head"; and Perlet reproaches Fauche roundly for his imprudent choice, in connection with so delicate a mission, of a messenger as ignorant as was Vitel of the rascality which in political intrigue becomes a mere precaution. On this occasion Fauche-Borel was annoyed: he would allow no one to accuse him of frivolity or clumsiness. "You have the cruelty to reproach me with my imprudence," he retorts; "but, good God! with all that influence, of whose extent you have never ceased to remind me, could you not even postpone the execution of a sentence as cruel as it was revolting? What Vitel was to do he was to do through you, and you could not even devise a means of seeing or speaking to him for a moment!"* He did not attempt to conceal the fact that Vitel's fate had greatly diminished the confidence of the British Cabinet in Perlet's competence, and the influence of his Committee: "This, I confess, has greatly diminished our hopes;" but in the same breath, in order to take the sting out of his criticism, he continues: "I can feel all the grief which you must have felt!"†

As for François Fauche, who had taken refuge in Copenhagen, where he served as intermediary in the correspondence between his brother, Mitau and Paris, it was April 25 before he learned of Vitel's arrest, and his grief prudently expresses itself in commercial terms: "I had already heard of the accident which occurred to *one of the cases of jewelry* . . .

* Fauche-Borel to Perlet, *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6319^{A}. Letter No. 40.

† *Idem*, letter No. 39, of the same date.

if you still had the means of saving it, why did you not apply to *our neighbour* (Fauche-Borel) ? This must have been possible since you tell me that by *paying the duty* on it you can recover *this case*. . . ."* Perlet did not succeed in doing so, as we have seen, and the two brothers Fauche, despite their very real grief, none the less continued their disappointing undertaking. Perlet's letters—as a measure of prudence, according to himself—discuss the details of the tragedy of April 4 and its buried causes, and one begins to realise more from what is left unsaid than by what is openly expressed, that one all-powerful will must have controlled the tragic adventure. The death-warrant came from Bonaparte himself.† And now in London the imagination of men constantly grappling with illusions contrived to draw favourable conclusions from this fresh aspect of the case. If the tyrant has attacked this defenceless boy with such ferocity, it is because he is under no illusion as to the soundness underlying his power. He has guessed of the existence of this terrible Committee, which has sworn to destroy him, and since he dare not openly attack this terrible adversary, he has wreaked his wrath on the feeblest of its servants. This act of ruthless cruelty is a sign of weakness. The Emperor was beaten at Eylau; he is lost; a mere touch, and he will go down in ruin.

It is to such nonsensical fables that we find the *émigrés* and the British Government giving their attention in the spring of 1807. Perlet and his Committee are once more in favour. No one asserts more forcibly than Fauche that Perlet is one of the most reliable of men, and that the Committee is not a hoax. Fauche has lectured the Ministers so much and to such good effect that they are ready to open their coffers. "I could offer you," writes Fauche to Perlet—"I could offer you 100 louis payable here each month in consideration of your dispatching, as a rule

* Fauche-Borel to Perlet, *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6319^{A}. Letter No. 41.

† "The order to assassinate my nephew which he himself gave increases my aversion for the tyrant who is afflicting the world and the French nation in particular" (Fauche to Perlet, letter No. 40).

by each courier, a list of all the novelties appearing in Paris, as regards the fashions as well as literature, etc.;" for which we may read "any newly-appointed members of the Committee." 100 louis!—2,400 francs!—for such a sum Perlet would write anything you asked him, and Fauche adds: "The loss of Number One is still a bitter grief to me, and having played such a prominent part in this affair I have need of all my private confidence in *Bourlac*"*—*Bourlac* being, as we know, one of the pseudonyms which Perlet employed in his correspondence.

And now we come to two incidents which are more than a little obscure. It is difficult to know precisely what to make of them. Among other prominent *émigrés* who were then in London was the Comte de Puisaye, a person of equivocal character, who, thanks to a shrewd mind, and the somewhat grandiose nature of his proposals, and his apparently profound intellect, had succeeded in making an impression upon the Ministers of George III., and had indeed attained the position of their unofficial adviser. Whether he had special sources of information, or whether his suspicion was the result of mere common sense, he believed neither in Perlet nor in his Committee. In order to enlighten the British Ministry as to the nature of this hoax, Puisaye advised the dispatch to Paris of a second emissary, a man of greater experience than Vitel, in order to sound Perlet, and "see what he had in his sack." Fauche, who had perfect confidence in his correspondent, did not oppose the plan, but fearing lest Puisaye, who was in greater favour at Court than himself, should take charge of the "affair," he eagerly recommended, as the person best fitted to undertake this journey, his friend Danican, of mournful memory, whose career we have already briefly sketched. This boastful gentleman—who had been known as "the General" since the affair of Vendémiaire—left London in May, confident that he would get the truth concerning the Committee out of Perlet, and further, that he would get out of him the name of the wretch who had informed Bonaparte of poor

* Fauche to Perlet, June 23, 1807, letter No. 45.

Vitel's presence in France. He set out on his journey, provided with 12,000 francs, and Fauche-Borel warned his friend Perlet of his arrival in the following terms: "Not to dwell upon the past, we must try to forget the very real loss of the first case . . . consignment number II. will reach you in very good condition, having been packed with special precautions in order to avoid damage." "Consignment number II.," we need hardly say, was Danican, who, sentenced to death by default some twelve years previously, and provided, into the bargain, with a letter of introduction from Fauche to Perlet, and a sum of 12,000 francs, might well take his leave of life. This he probably realised; for while his employers were anxiously waiting for news of the intrepid traveller, they learned that he was safe and sound—in London. Having pushed as far as Rouen, according to his own account of the matter, he was forced to beat a precipitate retreat "in order to escape an imminent danger." But he was on the point of setting out again . . . though, as a matter of fact, he took good care not to leave the country. And Fauche wrote to Perlet: "Consignment number II. has been returned: it has undergone a slight deterioration. . . ."*

The failure of Danican's venture induced Puisaye to take over the direction of affairs. He had at his disposal a reliable man who was confident of getting in touch with Perlet, and of inducing him to reveal the composition of the Committee: the name of this enterprising messenger was to remain unknown to Fauche,† but in order to facilitate him in his task Fauche was to write a few lines of introduction, which would assist him in getting into touch with Perlet.

* For details of Danican's unsuccessful journey, see *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6319^{A}, letter 49; and *Mémoires pour Louis Fauche-Borel*, by Lombard de Langres. Later on Fauche sent Perlet a third messenger, a man of ripe age, Prevost de Boissy; but he did not stop short at Rouen; he pushed forward bravely to Paris, saw Perlet, and, like Vitel, was never seen again. Arrested in May, 1813, he was shot at Grenelle.

† This messenger can hardly have been other than Puisaye himself, according to one of Fauche's letters to Perlet (*Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6319^{A}, letter No. 53).

Fauche obeyed unwillingly . . . but he at once told Perlet that Puisaye, realising the value of the affair, was doing his best to confiscate it. And Perlet ?—Perlet realised that he would not find Puisaye as credulous as Fauche-Borel; so that when the emissary called upon him and handed him Fauche's note as a letter of introduction,* Perlet declared "that he knew neither the name nor the handwriting; that he hadn't the least idea what it was all about," and showed the intruder to the door.†

Fauche was triumphant: "Here," he wrote, "is the proof that Perlet was an honest man; for why should he have been expected to reply to an unknown and nameless cailer, who may well have seemed a suspicious character, and who came to him as the bearer of a confidential letter of whose presentation he cannot have been warned ? . . . In Perlet's behaviour, therefore, we can see nothing but an action dictated by prudence and common sense; now Perlet is neither a creature of the police nor a man to be bought with money. . . ." Puisaye, too, was triumphant, for he was now convinced that there was collusion between Perlet and Fauche, who were determined that no one else

* This letter was as follows: "You may place the most absolute confidence in the person who will bring you or send you this letter, and you may send your replies to his letters to the address which he will give you. This is all that is needful for the comprehension and furtherance of the business with which you are occupied, and for the conclusion of which you will be furnished with such sums of money as are considered necessary.—Louis Dodeley" (This was one of Fauche-Borel's pseudonyms.)

† The letter in which Puisaye's messenger relates these facts is dated October 24, 1807, Carentan. "M. P. (Perlet) is annoyed. He told me that I was taking him for somebody else, a remark which displeased me greatly and caused me much anxiety. As he had put the letter into his pocket I asked him to return it. He refused to do so, and finally told me that he advised me to leave Paris that very day, and that I ought to consider myself fortunate if he did not denounce me to the police. It seemed to me that I could not do better than take his advice. He does not know my name, nor where I came from" (Records of the Foreign Office, Fonds Bourbon, 1641). This incident seems to be very exactly related by Fauche-Borel in his *Mémoires*, iv., 17. He reproduces almost word for word the report of Puisaye's unknown messenger to Perlet.

should meddle in their intrigue, by which they were hoping to make a handsome profit. Fully persuaded now that Perlet was a rogue, and that his Committee had no existence, Puisaye was not far from suspecting that Fauche, who knew as much of the affair as he himself, was most obligingly continuing to allow himself to be hoaxed in order not to diminish the generosity of the British Government, whose faith in such a profitable delusion he carefully cherished. Hence an exchange of letters between Fauche and Puisaye, letters that stung like so many slaps in the face,* and a resounding rupture.

Since Vitel's death, Fauche-Borel's confidence in his Paris correspondent was, it must be omitted, a matter of amazement to many. His affection for Perlet seemed twice as great as before, and he wanted all those about him to share it. Louis XVIII., weary of the humiliations and the isolation of Mitau, had just arrived in England,† to the great displeasure of the British Cabinet, which nevertheless decided to allow the exile to remain on the condition that he was to be known only as the Comte de Lille. Bearing this title, the King was installed, for the time being, at Gosfield, in the county of Essex. Fauche announced the good news to Perlet: "The hopes which the King has based on the operations of your Committee has contributed greatly to his determination to place himself in closer touch with you, despite the many dangers to be faced. . . . Henceforth everything that you forward will be given to *Fietta* (Louis XVIII.). I am instructed by M. *Courtener* (d'Avaray) to tell you that he is in good health, and to assure you of the great satisfaction with which *Fietta* regards your labours and those of your Committee. I hope very shortly to send you

* "It will be for the Government to judge how far such a man as yourself can insist on obtaining knowledge of such matters which it should keep secret," wrote Puisaye to Fauche. The latter retorted: "Such a man as I am is far more loyal than such a man as yourself. . . . If you were in the right you would not be such a cowardly rogue as to write to me in this impertinent strain . . . etc." (*Mémoires de Fauche-Borel*, iv., 22).

† *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6319^{A}, letter No. 53.

a letter in *Fietta's* own hand." One would like to know with what feelings the noble informer accepted these compliments, and what he thought of the unfathomable simplicity of his correspondent. At the end of his letter Fauche surpasses himself. "One is thankful for your frank sincerity," he says, and Perlet, however intoxicated by the success of his roguery, must surely have felt that Fauche was going too far.

For that matter, the policeman was not feeling very comfortable. For some months Fauche, realising the difficulty of sending his "faithful friend," a messenger bold enough to expose himself to the dangers of a stay in Paris, who was yet of sufficient importance to deserve the honour of being received by the Committee, had got it into his head that he must persuade Perlet to undertake the journey to London; there, at least, surrounded by trusty friends, he would at length be free to reveal all that he had so long kept secret, as a matter of scrupulous but praiseworthy prudence. Proud of this idea, proud of the thought of introducing to the Ministers of the King of England and the leaders of the *émigrés* the "admirable man" who was indeed his own creation, Fauche-Borel insistently returned to the charge in each of his letters, certain that if Perlet would accept his proposal the restoration of the Bourbons would shortly be an accomplished fact. "You are expected," he wrote; and he advised Perlet to bring a secretary with him "who would carry the more important documents on his person." They would discuss together the safest means of dispatching to Paris a person not yet named—but doubtless one of the Princes of the Royal Family—who would seize the reins of power "during the first few moments" while waiting for the arrival of the King himself.* When Louis XVIII. had arrived in England, Fauche-Borel's insistence was more urgent than ever: he was longing to lead to the brother of Louis XVI. so zealous a champion of the legitimate Monarchy. His august Majesty would be delighted to assure Perlet of his gratitude: he was constantly speaking

* *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6319^{A}, letter No. 50.

of his desire to know and thank this valuable helper. And Louis condescended to add his intreaties to those of Fauche. "What the King wishes," he explained, "is to see the arrival of a trustworthy person duly authorised, and provided with obvious proofs. It is with the liveliest satisfaction that I take advantage of this opportunity to assure *Bourlac* (Perlet) and his friends of yet another proof of the King's confidence in them, and, I venture to add, of my own esteem and my own personal feelings."*

This was too much. Perlet became suspicious, and his hesitation was justified. Convinced that Fauche-Borel must now know the truth of his nephew's imprisonment and death, he asked himself, anxiously, whether the bookseller, thirsting for vengeance, was not hoaxing him in his turn in order to set for him a trap like that in which young Vitel had been taken. In Paris Perlet had nothing to fear; even though his roguery should be discovered, the all-powerful protection of Veyrat, of the Prefect Dubois, and of Desmarest, his instigators and accomplices, was a sure guarantee of immunity. But in London, alone in the midst of the *émigrés* and the foreigners with whom he had audaciously been playing for the last two years, how could he hope to escape from such an accumulation of wrath and hatred? And even though Fauche were still his dupe, even though the King and d'Avaray were firm in their assurances of gratitude, esteem, and friendship, would himself be sufficiently astute and cunning to pay his part? He would have to speak, he would have to describe the origin of this fantastic, illusory Committee; he would be compelled to mention names. But what names? Men such as Louis XVIII. or Mr. Canning were by no means so easy to deceive as a Fauche-Borel. He had allowed it to be believed that Fouché had been won over to their side; and would these men, on the strength of his assertions, enter into direct relations with the Minister? What a catastrophe! Already Fauche had written to him: "If you could only

* Postscript signed *Courtener*, December 29, 1807. *Idem*, letter No. 55.

count upon Fouché's support, they would be inclined here to place the utmost confidence in him, since they are acquainted with his resources, and there is nothing that he might not ask for on this side of the Channel. But it is for you to decide whether he is as yet ready to be sounded." And Perlet replied, in order to put an end to these illusions, respecting the Minister upon whom his fate depended: "One would have to risk many dangers, and one could not hope for success did one attempt to secure Fouché! I tell you this on my own account. . . . He is a man who has no wants; he is loaded with honours and enormously wealthy, and he has a way of thinking that would not match with ours. Let him be, and do not let us speak of him again; I will answer for it that we shall be able to do without him."* But if easy in his mind with regard to Fouché, how many others would he be forced to compromise if he were compelled to reveal the names of his imaginary accomplices!

This is why Perlet was in no hurry to respond to the invitation of his London correspondents. But as the letters reaching him from England were forwarded by him to Veyrat, who passed them on to Dubois, who passed them on to Desmarest, so that the latter might submit them to Fouché, these influential persons judged that a visit to the Pretender's Court might enable their agent to obtain valuable information, and Perlet was ordered to make the journey to England. If he declined he would lose all that he stood to win by his lengthy and laborious fabrication; he therefore obeyed, but lingered over his meticulous preparations and prudent precautions. In his *dossier* the curious will find the list of those items of information which he was to secure, and the commissions with which he was entrusted: "To ascertain the attitude of the two brothers (Louis XVIII. and the Comte d'Artois!), mutual, and to the Ministers—the names of those Frenchmen who have gone to England during the last four or five months—What does England think of Russia?—What is one to think of the proposed

* Letter of November 6, 1807 (*Mémoires de Fauche-Borel*, iv., 15, 16).

marriage of the Comte d'Artois to the daughter of the Marquess of Buckingham ?—An account of the various works published by Puisaye, d'Antraigues, Dumouriez, the Abbé Delamarre, etc., etc." We shall find, too, among Perlet's papers, a blank counterfoil from some register of passports; probably the counterfoil of the passport which he fabricated for his own use. He was to travel under the name of "Bourlac," but would sign his reports "Charles." Letters intended for him were to be sent to M. Billot, Merchant, Havre, and were to be worded so that they might pass for those of "a prisoner of war writing to his brother-in-law."* He finally left Paris, anything but eager for the fray, on March 17, 1808, making for Holland, where he was to wait for an opportunity of crossing the water, fully persuaded that he would never escape alive from the trap into which he was being driven, and that this journey was to be his last exploit; for this extraordinary expedition was apparently bound to end in a dagger-thrust, a pistol-bullet, or the hempen necktie of the gallows.

* *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6238.

CHAPTER VI

PERLET IN LONDON

In the spring of 1808 communication between London and Paris was a very slow business. Sixteen months earlier* Napoleon, in Berlin, had promulgated the famous proclamation of blockade, aggravated, a year later,† by the decree issued from Milan, which placed England "under the ban of the Continent." All communication, all correspondence between the British Isles and Europe, was forbidden; all merchandise suspected of British origin was given to the flames; every traveller suspected of having stayed in England was cast into prison. The sole means of communication that survived was smuggling; the smugglers were intensely active; and a secret passage to the Continent could be obtained by way of Heligoland, Denmark—where the "trade" was in the hand of the English—through Holland, and even across the Channel. There were gaps in the blockade, but an immense amount of time was wasted by going the longest way round. To reach Paris, Charles Vitel, for example, taking ship in the port of London, had to make for the little Sleswig seaport of Husum; from Husum he had to go to Gothenburg in Sweden, return to Hamburg, crossing to Hanover and passing through Frankfort, to break his journey at Neuchâtel, finally entering France with a Swiss passport. It took at least a fortnight for a letter to go from London to Paris, and the route was continually varying.‡

* December 21, 1806. † November 11, 1802.

‡ This was the average time required for Fauche's letters to reach Perlet: No. 42 left London May 19, arrived Paris June 1; No. 50 left August 25, arrived September 3. One of the letters recently quoted—No. 53—bears the following comment: "Dated London, November 24, 1807, reached Paris January 9, 1808. *Impossible to say by what route*" (*Archives nationales*, F^7 6319[A]).

Nevertheless, newspapers crossed the Channel; the *Moniteur* and the *Journal de l'Empire* were punctually received in London a week or ten or twelve days after the date of their publication; travellers, too, found means of entering and leaving France; which is proved by the fact that they were almost daily arrested at Boulogne. Some crossed by way of Jersey, when some chance fishing-boat would land them on the French coast at some point from which they made their way into Normandy.

From the very beginning of the French Revolution communications with England were maintained only with difficulty, save during the ephemeral Peace of Amiens. Communication with England was the crime which from the 18 Fructidor down to 1814 provided the Courts-Martial with the greater number of their victims. To carry a letter from London to France, or from France to England, was to risk one's life. As this history of the Perlet intrigue makes constant mention of letters exchanged between France and England, of consignments of money, drafts drawn by London bankers on Parisian banking-houses, and messengers who crossed the Channel and, as a rule, contrived to throw the police, excise-officers, and coastguards off the scent, it should be interesting to learn the secrets of this contraband traffic between two countries which officially were closed to one another. For fifteen years communication between France and England was the occasion of bloody tragedies, romantic pursuits, disguises, lawsuits, denunciations, police investigations, frantic escapes and pursuits and stratagems of epic importance. And yet communications between the two countries was effectually maintained. How was it done ?

The Frenchman, as all are aware, is able to adapt himself to circumstances with a pliability and ingenuity which are peculiar to himself. In the days of the Revolution, compelled to adapt himself to circumstances, in his efforts to evade the Draconian laws of the period, he gave proof of a truly remarkable fertility of mind. It is recorded that a native of Chambonas, in the department of Ardèche, who

had to carry to the frontier a letter for the brothers of Louis XVI., then at Coblentz, disguised himself as a shepherd, with the traditional smock and crook, mobilised a flock of sheep, which he drove, grazing them on chance pasturage, commons, and fallows, to Savoy, and no one thought fit to search his wallet nor even to demand his passport. At Chambéry he got rid of his sheep and threw his smock-frock into a ditch, and, reaching Coblentz by the post without a hitch, acquitted himself of the commission with which he was entrusted.* During the Terror communications with the *émigrés*, or with foreign countries, legally a capital offence, became a lucrative industry. At Saint-Claude there were peasants—you could "find twenty if you could find one"—who would guide through the mountains and across the Swiss frontier aristocrats who were being hunted down by the Revolutionary Committees.† The memoirs of contemporaries are constantly referring to such adventures. It was the same in the Vosges; a woman of Senones, near Saint-Dié, forwarded news, smuggled *émigrés* in or out of the country, told their kinsfolk who were remaining in France what was happening on the Rhine, and took charge of jewels or money. At Bruyères a girl, called Marie Barbe, carried letters, in all weathers, from France to Condé's army.‡ At the other end of the country, in Cotentin, a youth of eighteen, the Chevalier of Péronne, once a midshipman in the Royal Navy, waited on the Granville beach for the landing of the men who took charge of the post for England, and led them to a place of safety under the noses of customs-officers and police.§ A twelve-year-old boy, young de Gonneville, repeatedly traversed the whole of Normandy, carrying dispatches between Frotté's headquarters and the coast, sleeping in the woods, having first concealed them under the stones.‖ The beautiful young chatelaine of

* Daudet, *Émigration*, i., 140.

† Declaration of Duverne de Praile, 1797 (Barras, *Mémoires*, iii., 343).

‡ Forneron, *Émigrés*, ii., 269.

§ La Sciotier, *Frotté*, ii., 70.

‖ *Souvenirs militaires du Colonel de Gonneville*, ix.

Vauloue in La Manche, Mme. d'Anjou, succeeded in baffling the shrewdest members of the police-force for full ten years, until they surrendered all hopes of capturing this intangible dispatch-bearer and hostess to the Royalist emissaries.* This long apprenticeship bore fruit, and when the Continental Blockade was decreed it was confronted by an experienced staff of agents, ready to snap their fingers at all prohibitions, and to enter into relations with the British cruisers manœuvring day and night in sight of the French coast. In the papers of one of these agents, the police discovered, in 1805, "a detailed itinerary of the journey from Paris to Rotterdam, with mention of all those places where production of passports may be demanded, and those where the authorities do not trouble to demand them, and inns where one may put up without danger, etc." There were also, among these papers, instructions as to the employment of the "iron box," which was a metallic strong-box to hold letters, to be concealed among the rocks or in the sand of the seashore; after nightfall a boat would put out from the British fleet and approach the shore; and in order to spare the boat's crew the necessity of protracted search, a man smoking a pipe, posted on the cliff, directed their search by drawing sparks from his tinder-box according to a prearranged telegraphic code.† The Prefect of La Manche was informed, in 1805, that communications with Jersey were effected through the Île Chaussey by means of an "iron box," shaped and painted to resemble the projecting boulders amongst which it was placed: "Four persons have scoured the island from eleven o'clock in the morning to five o'clock in the afternoon, shifting all the boulders, probing all the recesses, without finding anything. It is true that the name of the Île Chaussey is applied to fifty-two small islets . . . which involves very long and difficult searches. . . .'‡ Even the boats employed in these affairs were especially prepared in view of examination: one of them, the *Jungfrau*

* *Mémoires de la Société académique du Cotentin*, Tome x., 1894.
† Police Report of June 6, 1805; d'Hauterive, i., No. 1443.
‡ D'Hauterive, i., 1037.

Elizabeth, was furnished with secret hiding-places wherein letters and packages could be concealed, "so that it would have been necessary to rip her to pieces in order to find them! Papers were sometimes placed even in the oars, which were bored and prepared for this purpose."* By such means most of the letters were dispatched which make part of the eighty volumes of the *Fonds Bourbons* preserved in the Foreign Office. The letters exchanged by Fauche and Perlet were doubtless dispatched by the "iron box"; which explains the length of time occupied by their transmission and the long intervals between the successive replies of this epistolary conversation.

The English correspondence was not without its "express" messengers—resolute, shrewd, and fearless men, who, to earn their living—and it was a good living, for this strange profession was excellently well paid—contrived somehow to cross the Straits, carrying the letters confided to them between the double soles of their heavy boots, or in the collars of their coats, or simply in their pockets. We read of a Breton, Hermely, who, from the time of the Directoire, went regularly to and fro between London and Paris, and snapped his fingers at all the watchers; many others did as much, with more or less success; during one period the municipality of Boulogne was easily persuaded to issue false passports;† but Fouché stationed there the terrible Mengaud, whom he called "his biggest bull-dog,"‡ and the case was altered. The profession was not without its unpleasant side, nor was it without risks; but it would seem that it had its attractions also, and those who followed it were resigned beforehand to the drawbacks attaching to it; Hyde de Neuville, landing in Normandy, congratulated himself on the "fairly easy" conditions of his journey, since he was able to get ashore "with the water only up to his shoulders."§ A lady whose surname was Chalamet,‖ realising that she

* D'Hauterive, i., 1456.

† Forneron, *Émigrés*, ii., 220. ‡ Madelin, *Fouché*, i., 291.

§ Hyde de Neuville, *Mémoires*, i., 236.

‖ She was the mistress of that Dupéron who, after Fructidor, founded a Royalist counter-police in Paris.

was about to be arrested, rolled the compromising documents which she was carrying into a ball, and swallowed them.* Such incidents are merely amusing; but more serious predicaments were frequent. How many messengers were captured and shot! Chateaubriand, Margadel, Tryon, d'Ambert, Laa, Surville, Quintal, Prigent, Goyon de Varouault, Goyon de Vaucouleurs, Goyon de Veaux, Toustain, Duluc, Rosselin . . . and for the few whose names are not entirely forgotten, how many hundreds fell unheeded and unknown! What vicissitudes, what adventures, what tragedies and melodramas are concealed behind the mysteries of this clandestine correspondence, to maintain which so many men, over a period of fifteen years, spent—and lost—their lives! The pigeon-holes of the Ministry of Police are full to overflowing with abortive romances, whose chief protagonists and whose termination are equally obscure. Now and again there is a flash of light, a hint of the truth, arousing the enquirer's curiosity; and suddenly all is dark again, and the trail, glimpsed for a moment, once more escapes from sight. In 1804 a vagabond was arrested at Fontainebleau; a man of forty-five, who by his own account was a cook, but lately arrived from Venice; he had left his employer on board ship; he gave his name as Mallard, a native of Charenton; in the end he admitted that he was an *émigré ;* he had spent twelve years as a monk in a Trappist monastery, two years with Condé's army, and five months a prisoner in the Temple; at Evreux he was placed under supervision; he escaped into Switzerland, made his way to Fribourg, and there became a Carthusian. He returned to France to see certain relatives. . . .† This man was assuredly someone's emissary; and that is all that we know of him.

The number of priests employed upon the lines of communication between France and England was very great; to confine ourselves for a moment to those intermediaries with whom Fauche-Borel was in touch, we may here recall

* Daudet, *Récits des Temps révolutionnaires*, 95.
† *Archives nationales*, AF^{iv} 1491.

two names already mentioned in this narrative; that of the Abbé Ratel, Brotier's agent, who succeeded in disappearing in time to escape deportation, and that of the Abbé Leclerc, *alias* "Boisvalon," the "man with the wall-eye," the perfect model of the conspirator, obstinate, active, adroit, enterprising, discreet, and—the most singular thing—disinterested. He was seen during the Terror, now wandering in the woods near Paris, now following the profession of a lawyer, the better to disguise himself, now living in hiding in the Rue du Pot-de-Fer, where Fauche found him "so well-informed of all that was happening in France" that he regarded him with a certain amount of suspicion, and was alarmed to find him, on his release from the Temple, at Münster in Westphalia, keeping an eye on those who came and went.

Ratel, from the first days of the Consulate, settled down in the neighbourhood of Boulogne-sur-Mer in the Château of a certain Mme. de Combremont. There he assumed the airs of the master of the house; he made no effort to conceal himself, but to all appearances led an idle life, even persuading his complaisant hostess to receive under her roof a Mlle. Sper, an ardent Royalist, supposed to be his mistress, whom the peasants of the district nicknamed *belle-peau*, because of her fresh complexion.* From this comfortable refuge Ratel dispatched a stupendous correspondence. England provided the funds and paid without haggling.†

The Abbé Leclerc, who from his den in the Rue Pot-de-Fer likewise maintained an unbroken and copious correspondence, collating all the reports of all the Royalist agencies in France, and forwarding them to the exiled

* Julienne Sper, known as Pauline, of independent means, domiciled in Paris, Rue Neu Saint-Paul, at the back of the Court-yard, native of Senlis. "She is believed to be a kept woman." In the year IX. she passed some months in the Temple (*Archives nationales*, F^7 6365).

† Ratel, from the time of his first entrance upon the scene had received 18,000 pounds sterling. He drew an annual salary of six hundred pounds, "two hundred and forty pounds of which were for Mlle. Sper" (Fauche-Borel, *Mémoires*, iii., 379).

Princes, was summoned to Boulogne in 1803 by the Abbé Ratel: it was just as war had again broken out between France and England; Bonaparte had conceived a tremendous scheme for landing his army upon English soil, and his camp was being organised. The British Government had of necessity to be well informed; as a measure of prudence Ratel was stationed in London, and Leclerc was placed in charge of all the clandestine traffic of the French coast—an eminently difficult and dangerous post; for patrols of gendarmes were forever scouring the country, and police-agents from Paris exercised the most minute supervision over the hinterland between Dunkirk to Étaples. Leclerc set to work upon the problem; Leclerc, who had neither château nor mistress; he would not even accept a salary, and spent nothing on his own requirements; he found a refuge in the homes of friends of the good cause, who gladly gave him shelter, and whom he never troubled for long, for he was always on the road, in a little berline, driven by his secretary, a certain Pierre-Marie Pois, whose pseudonyms were as numerous as they were picturesque: *Larose*, *Gaudebert*, *Vieille-Femme*, *Martin*, *La Besace*, *Vieille-Perruque*, etc. Thanks to this slender equipment Leclerc, who himself was known by the names *Bailly*, *Godefroid*, *Lepage*, contrived to provide the *émigrés* with reports containing information fully as valuable as the data contained in the Bulletin which Fouché, during the whole of his Ministry, daily dispatched to the Emperor. Leclerc's staff was small but select; he obtained his information through an agent stationed at Brest, a highly placed clerk in the Ministry of War, and another paid accomplice (still more highly placed), who filled a post in the administrative department of the navy; so that he was able to send to England precise information concerning the French army, the spirit pervading it, its numerical strength, its resources, its distribution, and its armament, while, at the same time, he conducted a political correspondence of such absorbing interest "as had never hitherto been known." Ratel having, on several different occasions, congratulated him in the name of the British

Government, the modest Leclerc replied: "The majority of those who assist us in our work do so merely because of their zealous spirit, their enthusiasm for the Royalist cause, and their desire to contribute to the restoration of order in Europe. Great and small alike help us by every means at their disposal." In this way foreigners were confirmed in the erroneous belief that Bonaparte was execrated by the majority of Frenchmen; and the whole *émigré* world beheld the tyrant reigning in the Tuileries through the wall-eye of the Abbé Leclerc.

On a coast whose smallest coves and inlets were occupied by military posts, and on which the whole strength of the French army was concentrated, how did Leclerc contrive to carry on his work of espionage and maintain unbroken communication with England? He used to set out in his little berline, usually accompanied by his secretary Pois, better known as *Larose*. Passing through Étaples, la Canche, l'Authie, and the Somme, and then la Bresle, he finally reached the district of Eu, which was not occupied by the Imperial troops, and there he got in touch with needy fishermen. He would order a good meal, throwing his money about and paying generously in golden coins. Pois, drinking brandy and filling the glasses of his guests, would explain that he was a merchant who had to advise an *émigré* living in London of an unclaimed inheritance; nothing whatever political—merely a matter of private interests;-and he read passages from the letter which he carried, not a word of which could possibly seem compromising, unless it occurred to one that there might be a message written in invisible ink in the spaces between the lines. And there was always someone present who would offer to deliver the letter to the cruiser which the French boats frequently encountered in the English Channel. For this service Pois used to offer 20 louis—almost 500 francs —a little fortune. The fisherman thus hooked became a regular accomplice; the bait of money, earned so easily, with almost perfect immunity, made him and kept him a zealous helper; especially as the commission was easy to

fulfil, since the British Navy, which, after nightfall, skirted the French coast at a short distance from the shore, lent itself to this forbidden traffic. Moreover, the British sailors gave the French fisherman the warmest of welcomes; he received a present of money, a good swig of brandy, and on returning to the shore he was careful to divert, on landing, any suspicions that might enter the minds of the coastguards.

Leclerc enlisted in this manner one Phillippe, a fisherman who also kept a grocer's shop at Tréport, who himself enlisted two comrades, by name Dieppois and Lefort, and then Duponchel, the local schoolmaster. He gave them a dark lantern, and told them how to use it: "You go down to the water's edge with your lantern lit; you show a light three times at intervals of half an hour, and then hide it; the English boats, which will be tacking to and fro along the coast, and which are in the secret, will then come inshore." He also instructed them as to what the English signals were: "A flag at half-mast, hoisted and lowered three times," means that there will be a letter to be forwarded on the following night. If there should be an excise-officer prowling about the neighbourhood, they must give the signal "*hopeless*"—a fire on the cliffs by day, or a rocket at night. Leclerc required his postman to give him a receipt for every packet given in aboard the cruiser; no receipt, no pay,* Mme. Phillippe, despite her prodigious corpulence delivered according to instructions, the letters received 12 francs for each journey. Leclerc advised her, if she were ever arrested on the road, to say "that she had just found the letters on the beach, and was taking them to the police at Eu or Boulogne."† This vagabond conspirator, already past his forties, and quite without physical attraction, was none the less able to exert an inexplicable influence over women.

* The *dossier* includes a document thus superscribed: "*Je reconnu à voir reçu au citoyen Bouton la some de cent franc pour le passasse d'une famm en Nagenterre* (*Angleterre*). *Boulogne*, 13 *juin*. *Robert Lefort*."

† *Dossier* of Philippe and her accomplices is in the *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6365.

That devout women, passionately attached to the Bourbon cause, should have risked prison or the scaffold by offering him a refuge does not greatly surprise us if we remember his sacred calling; but his fanatical hatred of Bonaparte and the revolutionary cause was irresistibly contagious, for it gave rise—quite against his will, of course, for Leclerc's morals appear to have been irreproachable—to a painful and annoying slander, which is deserving of mention as casting a peculiar light upon the morals of the period. Among the Royalist ladies with whom Leclerc took refuge from time to time was a Mme. de Roussel de Préville, the widow of a captain in the Royal Navy, who was one of the most respected members of Boulogne society. Mme. de Préville had, among other children, a daughter, who in 1804 was eighteen or nineteen years of age. Mlle. de Préville was extremely pretty, although a very little woman: "Her hair and eyebrows were chestnut, her eyes blue, her nose aquiline but well shaped, her mouth small, her chin round, and her face slightly flushed," to quote the description of a contemporary. Because of her beauty and her graceful movements she was known as the *Nymph*. She was accustomed to adulation; "full of gaiety, phenomenally frivolous and inconstant and ingenuous to the point of folly; balls, receptions, and the adornment of her person, were her sole preoccupation."* Whether it was due to the exaltation of a Royalist or to her love of romantic adventure, "Nymph" was full of enthusiasm for the anti-patriotic work to which Leclerc was devoting his life; and she offered him her services. He, ready to sacrifice everything to the success of what he had in hand, enlisted the child in his little troop of workers. From motives unknown to us, but which were sufficient to delude her mother, "Nymph," disguised as a boy, and under the name of Dubuisson, scoured the roads of the department and acted as messenger to the conspirators. She received the letters brought to her by the woman Phillippe and took them to Leclerc, whose whereabouts were

* Petition addressed to the Emperor by Mme. de Roussel de Préville, February, 1808.

always known to her and to certain other initiates; she paid his confederates their wages, and was often several days absent from Boulogne, pushing as far afield as Dieppe or Amiens alone, or in company with Pois, *alias* Larose. One of her uncles, the Abbé de Laporte, was one of the most active agents on the lines of communication, and frequently crossed the Channel in order to carry important documents to England.

Now it happened that, owing perhaps to the information of a spy, the gendarmerie at last got hold of the threads of this sinister society; Leclerc, with the searchers hot upon his heels, took refuge at Abbeville, in the house of a Mme. Denis, in the Petite Rue Notre-Dame, and there "Nymph" also found a refuge. The Tréport grocer, Phillippe, sold them to the police; and when one night the gendarmes called upon Mme. Denis, the terrified woman herself led them to the hiding-place of the papers relating to the correspondence of the secret post. The house was well-equipped for its purpose, for "Nymph" and the Abbé could not be found. The Abbé, it is believed, made off in the direction of Saint-Omer. The young girl quietly returned to Boulogne, informing her mother that she was outlawed, but innocent, and that she was going to give herself up. Mme. de Préville, bewildered, since up to that moment she had not had the least suspicion of her daughter's extravagant behaviour, sent her back to Abbeville, to some relatives of hers who lived there, begging the girl to lie carefully hidden. This was to ask altogether too much of that thoughtless young person: in a town full of experienced police-officers, who had come down from Paris to find Leclerc's accomplices, she spent the day at her window, and twice went so far as to appear at a public ball. Then one day, perhaps in a passing fit of prudence, she disappeared. More than a year later it was learned that the military commission sitting at Rouen had sentenced to death the fishermen Phillippe and Dieppois, the schoolmaster Duponchel, Leclerc, his secretary Pois, and *Nymph* de Préville, known as *Dubuisson*—these three last in default. Leclerc, after staying awhile in England, settled at Münster,

where he endeavoured to gather together the broken threads of the *correspondence** with the aid of his agents in Paris, and it seems that his attempt was successful. As for "Nymph," having, uncompanioned, crossed the greater part of Europe, in the hope of reaching Russia, she finally took ship to London, where she ceased her wanderings. The British Government bestowed on this child, condemned to death, an annual pension of 600 francs, on which she lived, wretchedly enough; according to a police report, she "bitterly deplored her fate."†

This digression in respect of the mysteries of the "English correspondence" department is not really a digression at all, since it enables us to realise what obstacles and what difficulties were placed in the way of a regular exchange of communications between France and the British Isles, Doubtless there were, despite the strictness of the blockade, certain exceptions and compromises; there were shipowners who, by paying enormous premiums, obtained licences, which were much sought after, and we know of instances of merchants openly dealing with England, despite the general prohibition; but their vessels, on sailing and arriving, were strictly searched, and their supercargoes ran very great risks by abusing their privileged position. All writings of an apparently political character, or containing merely ambiguous phrases, could never hope to cross the Channel, save by illicit means; and after the destruction of the contraband postal service created by Leclerc, the lines of communication were turned aside to Jersey and the Norman coast.

In the spring of 1808 Fauche-Borel, at the request of Mr. Canning, the British Foreign Secretary, undertook the task of auditing the accounts of Ratel and Leclerc. The

* The whole business of communication between France and England—the exchange of letters and the smuggling of passengers across the Channel—was described by the comprehensive term, "La Correspondence."—*Translator.*

† *Archives des Affaires étrangères*, Fonds Bourbons, 620, fo. 116 verso. For Nymph Roussel de Préville, V., *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6365 and 6580.

former presented a bill of 12,400 francs, advanced by him, so he asserted, for administrative purposes; as for Leclerc, he claimed only what was due to him—47,000 francs—refusing all rewards, having laboured, in his own words, only because of his desire to be of use to the cause of England and legitimate Monarchy." Fauche's investigations enabled him to prove that for a period of three years the "correspondence" had cost the British Government nearly 300,000 francs, a good portion of which had stuck to the fingers of the Abbé Ratel,* which he was forced to refund. But this audit of Fauche-Borel's raised up fresh enemies against him; the Comte de Puisaye, full of tenacious spite and extremely jealous of all competition, bitterly complained of the interloping bookseller: "It is astonishing," he grumbled, "that the British Cabinet should employ a Swiss to audit the accounts of a French *émigré*." And, to tell the truth, this rivalry placed Fauche-Borel in a critical position; for more than two years he had staked his all upon Perlet's Committee; it was his own conception, his vocation, "M. Fauche's affair," as people used to say; and sometimes with a snigger, for as time went on the numbers of the sceptics increased. Puisaye was of their company; he now no longer concealed his reasoned belief that "M. Fauche's affair" was a hoax; and he insisted that Perlet should be forbidden to land in England. "To bring him here is stupid; there are those that say that he will bring documents with him, and even the signatures of ten or a dozen of the principal members of the Committee. Do you suppose that men capable of directing an affair demanding such scrupulous circumspection would, in a body, entrust their names to paper, and all the risks of such a journey ?"†

Fauche, on the other hand, moved heaven and earth to get "his man" received and welcomed. Perlet was his trump card; and if this individual, who was invented and created by Fauche himself, should succeed in imposing

* *Mémoires de Fauche-Borel*, iii., 398 *et seq.*

† *Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères*, Fonds Bourbon, 641, August 28, 1807.

himself upon the Ministers of King George III., if he proved cunning enough to inspire them with confidence, and to convince Louis XVIII. of the actual existence of his Committee, the bookseller's fortune was as good as made, and he would be regarded as the *deus ex machina* of the Revolution. England and the world of *émigrés* would never weary of praising him, and of singing Hosannas in honour of his perspicacity; and what was more, the money-bags of the United Kingdom would have poured forth their contents in order that he might continue the task so marvellously accomplished. This is why he quivered with impatience while awaiting his friend Perlet; why he strained every nerve to obtain for him a reception worthy of so faithful a servant of the legitimate Monarchy.

As we have reported, the police-spy was already on the way; but he loitered, still hesitating, still fearing to push forward, so difficult did he find it to believe, above all, since the trap set for Vitel, that there could be people so simple as to take his mystifications seriously. His superiors were of the same way of thinking: "If Fauche-Borel is not trying to set a trap for the Paris agent in thus attracting him to London, we have here a credulity so stupid and so obstinate that one really cannot conceive of its possibility," wrote Desmarest in the *Bulletin de Police*. Thus, in sending Perlet to England, Dubois, Veyrat, Desmarest, and Fouché were convinced that he would never return. And the same impression had taken possession of Perlet; it was this that made him linger on the way. He travelled by the longest route; and at the end of ten days he found himself in Rotterdam, whence he dispatched a hurried note to Desmarest: "Arrived here in the best of health, provided with the best of references, and a very satisfactory letter of credit. . . . Had very great difficulty in following my route. . . . It is costing me much more than I expected. . . . But I hope to succeed . . . rely, Monsieur, on my zeal and devotion."*

* The letter is signed Gignoux, one of Perlet's pseudonyms, though he travelled under the name Bourlac. This is dated March 27, 1808 (*Archives nationales*, F^7 6238).

This was early in April; and he was then on the point of embarking for England, and Fauche, feeling that his dear friend was drawing near, was making ready to feast him and exhibit him with pride, when he received a blow from which he recovered only with difficulty: he was ordered to leave England!

Fauche-Borel banished! For him a deportation order was almost a sentence of death. Under what skies and upon what soil could he now take refuge? All Europe was groaning in the embrace of Bonaparte, that rival against whom the Swiss bookseller had for so many years waged ceaseless war. And now England, as a reward for his services, was about to surrender him to this ferocious enemy, who had kept him thirty months in prison, and was still sore at the thought of his escape! Such was the gist of Fauche's imprecations, as he staggered under the blow, and called down lightning from heaven upon the treacherous enemies who were responsible for this disaster! He was advised to hold his tongue, and to leave London then and there, in order to avoid expulsion by force. To leave London! And at the very moment when Perlet was about to make his appearance! It was enough to break a man's heart! However, he understood that any resistance would be useless, and he took the road for Bath, in the hope that the head of the aliens' office would be content with this apparent submission.

He was. Puisaye, who had instigated the order,* and was kept well-informed by his Paris agents,† had word of

* Such, at least, was the opinion of Fauche himself, who attributed his expulsion to d'Antraigues; but it may have been the case that the Paris police, who had plenty of secret agents and plenty of influence in London, took the precaution of getting Fauche-Borel out of the way, because he might have asked Perlet embarrassing questions, and might have insisted on details of the Vitel *affaire* and of the Committee. To banish Fauche was really to repeat the stratagem already employed by Perlet, when he underwent imprisonment in Sainte-Pelagie, on learning that Charles Vitel had arrived in Paris.

† "This individual (Puisaye) would appear to have certain direct relations with Paris" (*Bulletin de Police*, October 27, 1807; d'Hauterive, iii., No. 1105).

Perlet's imminent arrival. He still suspected collusion between this dubious personage and Fauche-Borel. He had decided to get Fauche out of the way, so that the other, left to himself, amidst unfamiliar surroundings, would be forced to play his part without a prompter, so that it would be an easier task to form conclusions as to his honesty and sincerity. But Fauche, overwhelmed with disappointment, since he would not be on the boards at the critical moment of the drama, was determined that at all events his voice should be heard "off"; if he was forbidden to appear he could at least write: accordingly he did write, to Louis XVIII., to Lord Moira, the ex-Cabinet Minister, and one of his protectors, protesting to all that his presence in London was indispensable, and that the fate of Europe depended upon it. . . . He was granted permission to remain in England for a term of ten years. He hastened to London . . . but Perlet had not arrived! It was now about the middle of May, so that the agent of the Committee must have been two months upon his way, and this delay gave rise to the most torturing hypotheses. Fauche-Borel had to return into exile without having seen "his dear friend," but not without warmly recommending him to all those for whom this happiness was reserved. To the Under-Secretary of State, whom he advised of the imminent arrival of this "loyal and valiant man" as an event of "extreme importance in the present circumstances," while Perlet himself was the "spokesman of a numerous and powerful party"; further, he begged that His Excellency, Mr. Canning, would be so good as to receive and welcome this valued friend who represented the cream of the French Royalists. In this fashion he himself appropriated, before the event, some part of the success which Perlet was bound to enjoy on introducing himself to the British authorities.

But Perlet did not appear. Having arrived in Rotterdam on March 27, he may still have hesitated to continue his journey, or he may have found it pleasant, to breathe, for a time, in freedom, released for a moment from the heavy chains which he had riveted upon himself; at all events, it

was June 5 before he engaged his passage upon a Dutch vessel, which, breaking through the blockade, contrived, in the open sea, when a day's run distant from her port of origin, to come alongside an English fishing-boat, on which Perlet continued his voyage. He reached Gravesend on June 10, at eight o'clock in the morning.

Immediately two policemen came aboard, forbidding the Frenchman, in the King's name, to set foot upon English soil. For ten days he had to remain aboard the uncomfortable vessel which had brought him to the Thames, unable to get permission to obtain those amenities of the toilet and hygiene indispensable after a rough crossing. He had to live with the crew, sleeping in their cabin and eating their food; on June 18 a post-chaise carried him off to Newgate prison—a first stage on a way to Botany Bay, or was it to the King's Palace, there to be treated as a distinguished Ambassador? By six o'clock on the following morning he was in London, where he was received with the utmost attention by an individual who introduced himself as a State messenger. He now had an opportunity of recruiting his energies and clothing himself in a more seemly fashion, and that afternoon he was presented to Lord Hawkesbury, the Home Secretary.*

Our worthy police-agent must have been endowed with remarkable presence of mind in order to accomplish, without warning, the task with which he was now confronted. A poor devil without breeding or manners or refinement, he had all the obsequious humility of the unfortunate; we do not know how he expressed himself in conversation, but his literary style shows that he was ill-informed, clumsy, and lifeless. Confronted by a member of the English aristocracy, so exclusive and so disdainful of all that was not of "their world," he could do nothing but tell lies so improbable as to be an impertinence; he would have to pass, despite his awkwardness and his embarrassment, for an emissary selected and delegated by "eminent persons in the highest circles of Parisian society"; it was a thousand to one that

* Bourlac's account of his mission to London is in the *Archives de la Préfecture de Police.*

Hawkesbury's perspicacity would discover Perlet's rascality. But no! It was the peer, the aristocrat, who was taken in the net, and the rogue who lured him thither! He began by complaining bitterly of the way he had been treated since his arrival in England; he was kept under supervision, and was denied access to his "friends"; and even in the presence of the Minister himself, although treated with every respect, he was still a prisoner. Hawkesbury excused himself: "there were inevitable difficulties; the kind of annoyance of which the traveller complained was intended simply to prevent him from speaking to anyone before he was admitted into the presence of Louis XVIII.; apart from that, M. Perlet had only to ask for anything that he might require; orders had been given that his requirements should be satisfied." The conversation then turned "familiarly" upon Bonaparte: "What are his intentions?" enquired the Minister. "Is it possible to obtain information relating to the decisions of his Council?" Perlet then embarked upon a long description of the cunning and authoritative character of the Emperor; like one familiar with the life of Courts, he complained that "Bonaparte is different from other Sovereigns; he does not divulge his plans to anyone; and although he will allow his Ministers and his Marshals to submit their opinion, he alone takes the final decision. . . . You will realise, my Lord," the spy continued, "that such a fashion of governing is difficult to understand, and that those who profess to be in the possession of secret information are obviously impostors."* Lord Hawkesbury then questioned him as to the famous Committee and the influence of the Royalist cause in France; but here the police-agent affected discretion; there were certain confidences which he was forced to reserve for the King, his Master; nevertheless, he insisted that the powerful Committee which he represented in the capacity of spokesman was certain of success, "by reason of the authority of its members no less than by the measures of safety which had been taken beforehand." But one thing was necessary: the Committee must be very exactly

* Bourlac (Perlet), *compte rendu*.

informed of all measures that the British Government was preparing to take in order to destroy the Emperor and his power, "so that some common action might be devised." And Perlet adds, in his narrative: "Lord Hawkesbury was apparently pleased by this suggestion." The interview over—and it occupied a good two hours—Lord Hawkesbury escorted his visitor, little accustomed to such deference, to the outer door of his chambers, paying him the usual compliments. He then handed him over to Mr. Brooke, the head of the aliens' office, whom he instructed to anticipate all his wants. On the following day Perlet was received by Mr. Canning, the Foreign Secretary. With him also he enjoyed a conversation of a couple of hours' duration, and Canning likewise appeared to have conceived a wholly favourable opinion of his visitor. Mr. Brooke, on escorting the spy from the Foreign Office, did not conceal his impression that His Excellency was highly pleased; consequently, says Perlet—and we have here a revelation of the man's commonplace nature—"from that moment, Mr. Brooke was full of little attentions to me, and treated me with those marks of consideration which one pays to a man who is on good terms with Cabinet Ministers. . . ."

While waiting until Louis XVIII. should consent to receive him, Perlet had to remain, if not a prisoner, at least a recluse, the aliens' office providing him with board and lodging. His pseudo-imprisonment was of brief duration; on June 22 the Comte de la Châtre, the accredited representative of Louis XVIII. at the Court of George III., called upon Perlet at seven o'clock in the morning and invited him to take a seat in his carriage. The Royal audience was fixed for that day. This was the decisive test. Here was Desmarest's informer, Veyrat's blind partisan, bowling along the roads in a carriage adorned by the three fleurs-de-lys, seated beside a gentleman of the highest reputation, a member of the ancient nobility of France, a Brigadier-General, a Grandee of Spain, Knight of the Golden Fleece, Brigadier-General in the English Army and Commodore in the Navy. One would like to know what passed, during

this drive, between Perlet the vulgarian and this complete *grand seigneur*, famed for his tact, his delicacy, and his chivalrous frankness. How was it that this type of the French noble, so shrewd and experienced, failed to realise the worthlessness of his companion from some hopeless blunder, some mispronounced word, or from the exaggerated quality of his humility? Why did he fail to realise the impossibility that such a man should be what he professed to be, and the danger of admitting him to the home of the exiled monarch, so jealously protected by those about him from strangers and intriguers? This stranger at least was the bearer of flattering messages, and men are careful, above all, to cherish the illusions by which they live. The Comte de la Châtre gave Perlet into the care of the Comte d'Avaray, who had come to London expressly to escort the emissary of the Paris Committee to the King. The drive to Gosfield occupied something over four hours, and during the journey, d'Avaray, a man whose devotion was always on the alert, appears, like la Châtre, to have remarked nothing calculated to surprise him or arouse his suspicions. They reached the Château at half-past eleven, and the spy was immediately taken into the King's closet. Louis XVIII., impatiently awaiting him, rose as he entered and advanced to meet him, a mark of favour which, formerly at Versailles, many of the Sovereign's noblest and most intimate servants had never received. Utterly ignorant of etiquette, Perlet thought fit to throw himself on his knees, and prostrate himself, lying on his stomach, on the carpet. The King appeared surprised and even alarmed by this unaccustomed ceremonial; but he was eager to obtain immediate information from Perlet; and sitting before his desk he pointed out a chair "quite close to his own," and the conversation between them was commenced. Something was said of the "powerful party" in Paris which was working to recall His Majesty to the throne of his ancestors. To judge by Perlet's own record of this memorable interview, he emitted his usual trivial and commonplace remarks in a tone of the humblest servility; which he doubtless believed to be in the

very best taste. We may also presume that the purist to whom he was speaking must have been amazed that his faithful supporters had not been able to find a delegate of greater personal distinction and higher rank. But it is idle even to attempt to describe this interview, since one of the parties must needs have lied about it, while the other never spoke of it. One thing is certain—Perlet must have been forced at last to name the members of the chimerical Committee: he was there for that purpose, and he could not avoid doing so. We can hear him imploring His Majesty to maintain the most absolute secrecy in this connection, and begging him to promise the most absolute discretion. It is rather humiliating to think that the descendant of the Bourbons should thus have pledged himself never to reveal to anyone the lying confidences of this lying rascal, for this phenomenal rogue, this man who lived by deceit and perjury, retained, as a relic of many obsolete prejudices, the conviction that a King of France would not break his promise. And it must have been just this that set him at his ease; in the confidence that his remarks would not be repeated, he must have mentioned such names as he conceived would be most agreeable to the King's ear: those best calculated to add to the importance of his function as go-between.

The comic note in this distressing episode is furnished by Fauche-Borel; prevented by approaching the capital by the order of the aliens' office, he had been authorised to live in Oxford; and there he was, quivering with impatience at the thought that his dear friend Perlet, no longer under supervision since his reception by the King, was about to return to France before he could find the means and opportunity of exchanging confidences and enjoying a few hours of his company. Never doubting the good impression produced by the agent of the Paris Committee on the Ministers whom he had interviewed and the little Court at Gosfield, and longing to remind everybody that it was he who had invented and advised this astonishing person, he wrote to the spy in the most affectionate terms, adopting the tone of a coaxing and affectionate mother. Perlet had been obliged

to occupy Fauche's rooms, vacated by reason of his exile; and he deplored the fact that he himself was not there in order to make much of the man who filled so "large a place in his heart."—"If I had been at home, you would have found your dinner piping hot at that hour."—"You are sleeping in my room, in my bed, and I cannot even see you! . . . Is it not diabolical?"* He was also uneasy as to Perlet's imminent departure. What if Bonaparte's police, informed by some scoundrel, should tap him on the shoulder as he stepped ashore! . . . "How anxious I shall be until I know that you have arrived in Paris."—"Although I have not had the pleasure of embracing you, remember that my fate is bound up in your own, and that nothing in the world can part me again from such a friend as yourself!" Perlet, too, poured forth his heart in letters no less affectionate; he confided his grievances to Fauche; he had seen the King, but he did not receive from him or from the members of the Cabinet such a welcome as he had a right to expect. And Fauche consoles him: "Your letter, my best of friends, cuts me to the quick; I beg you to have courage. The principal purpose of your journey is accomplished: you have seen *Fietta*, and you will be able to form an accurate idea of his painful situation; this is always of increasing interest to his faithful subjects, to whom you will have the pleasure of bearing the expression of his hopes." Learning that Perlet was about to re-embark, he could no longer control himself; ready to risk deportation, his one desire was to embrace this admirable colleague to whom he had so much to say. Firstly, he must try to extract from Perlet the names of the members of his Committee; he also wished to know the name of the traitor who sold poor Vitel. He *knew*, since Perlet had given him a hint as to the facts, that his nephew was betrayed to the Imperial Police even before he left London; so that the assassin was himself in London, and Fauche suspected that his desperate enemy, Puisaye, was guilty of this odious crime; but he wished to be certain before taking an unforgettable revenge upon the wretched man; then, with

* *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6238.

the help of his friend Danican, he arranged a meeting; Perlet was to spend one Sunday at Uxbridge, half-way to London: and Fauche would go there to meet him. "We shall take supper together on the Saturday evening, and on the Sunday we will have a good dinner." And why should not Perlet bring with him Mrs. S——,* who might be accompanied by Mrs. T——,† "when there would be a party." Positively, this far-sighted man thought of everything!

The party took place; but Fauche was unable to extract from his friend those precise details concerning the Committee which he was so anxious to obtain, nor the name of Vitel's assassin, for Perlet was depressed and gloomy, and it was important, above all, to encourage him and restore his spirits. He was, in fact, feeling offended; for on his second visit to the house of the Comte d'Avaray, he found the doors closed against him; and the trusted friend of Louis XVIII. had declared by the mouth of his man-servant, that "he could not be seen." Moreover, Perlet was deploring the loss of a small pocket-book which served him as a memorandum-book, in which was entered some "highly confidential information."

The history of this pocket-book is a revelation of the man's cunning and perspicacity; ignorant though he was of social usages, he vaguely realised that, little accustomed to being well received, he had foolishly taken for marks of esteem the ordinary politeness of the eminent personages with whom he was negotiating. The courtesy shown him on his arrival, which to him was a new experience, soon made way for an obvious indifference; the truth being that he was hardly taken seriously, so that the success of his journey seemed to be already endangered. In order to recover lost ground he conceived the idea of entering, in pencil, in a small pocket-book bound in red morocco, a few names, figures, and dates, and of hiding the book in a dark corner behind

* Mrs. Sherringham, 9, Frith Street, Soho, with whom Fauche-Borel lodged while in London.

† Mme. Thiot, who let furnished apartments, "in the French style," in London.

his bed. Then he assumed an air of great anxiety, informing everybody that he had just mislaid a memorandum-book of great importance, containing valuable notes, and enquired whether anyone had found this compromising document. The conclusion drawn from his uneasiness was that this notebook contained the most intimate secrets of the Parisian conspirators; perhaps even the composition of the mysterious Committee. Fauche-Borel betrayed the most painful anxiety and begged Perlet to reassure him: "Tell me if you have your pocket-book!"—and he was almost ready to suspect Puisaye or d'Antraigues of having stolen the book that recorded their crimes. "I am convinced that they are giving people the impression that you are a spy. These men are monsters! Your lost pocket-book may perhaps reveal the fact that you know the name of the agent who is in touch with Talleyrand. . . ." At last the pocket-book was recovered; but before it was returned to its owner, it passed, as Perlet had secretly hoped, through the hands of the Ministers and into those of d'Avaray; it even reached Fauche-Borel. Needless to say, not one of these people had the slightest scruple in the matter of deciphering its hieroglyphics. And among a number of notes scribbled in pencil this memorandum-book contained a list of names; the names of the members of the Committee of which Perlet had made such a perpetual mystery—"Royer-Collard, Barthelemy, Molé, Mollien, Fouché . . .," so Fouché was on the Committee! When the spy recovered his pocket-book he had added a hundred cubits to his stature in the eyes of the British Cabinet and the Court of Gosfield; so that the British Government now undertook to arrange for his return by way of Denmark and Sweden, "so that Bonaparte's police should have no idea that he had been staying in England."*

Although well provided with money and letters of credit by his superiors, Perlet was quite willing that his travelling-

* Ten letters addressed by Fauche to Perlet during the latter's stay in London were handed to Perlet on the spy's return to Paris and may now be found in the *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6238.

expenses should be paid by Lord Hawkesbury, or by Mr. Canning, or by both. Fauche-Borel encouraged him in this ambition, assuring him that English generosity was unlimited: "Nobody comes here from France or leaves here for that country without receiving 500 louis." But the Ministers were deaf to his hints, doubtless considering that the powerful Committee could very well pay its agents. Disappointed in this respect, Perlet presented an account of his expenses to d'Avaray, who paid him 55 louis; the King of France was poor. Perlet considered this sum "humiliating"; he returned it to d'Avaray, and it was Fauche-Borel, who, in order to assure his friend's comfort on his return journey, gave him 3,500 francs from his own pocket. His last words of farewell are full of affection: "It would be impossible to find two beings who would understand one another more completely where great interests are at stake . . . the longer I live the more plainly I see that good faith, candour, and truth, are the sole forces that work together for good." However, he did not forget himself: "Let your Committee insist that I remain your principal agent . . . if I feel that I am justified in thus pushing myself forward, it is only because I have had fifteen years' experience of matters of State*"; and it was to Desmarest's police that the poor man was addressing this ingenuous outburst, for no sooner had he returned to Paris than Perlet handed all Fauche's letters to his superiors, together with a detailed report of his expedition.†

In this report he did not fail, as we may imagine, to lay stress upon his own abilities:‡ "The month which I passed

* *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6238.

† By July 21, 1808, Perlet had probably been in Paris some few days, for he had already handed to Desmarest the report of his journey. Consequently, it is not true that he spent a month in London, as he assured his superiors; for the term of his visit to England cannot have exceeded a fortnight. This is confirmed by Fauche-Borel (*Mémoires*, iv., 54).

‡ Perlet, it would seem, must have written two reports: one was intended for the Ministry of Police, while the other would have been conceived as though to inform his imaginary Committee of the details of the journey. Accordingly, he would have spoken with deference of Louis XVIII., and in respectful terms of the British

in London," he wrote, "was employed, uninterruptedly, in gathering information . . . not a single half-hour was lost, so my head is well furnished; and I think His Excellency will decide that it will be well to continue the correspondence. . . ." But Desmarest was not a man to be dazzled by the bragging of one of his agents. There were probably spies amongst the persons surrounding Louis XVIII.; reliable men, to whose comments he would have given more credence than to the boasts of an obscure subordinate: and having read Perlet-Bourlac's narrative, and carefully annotated Fauche's letters,* he declared that the informer's mission was a fiasco. His account of the matter, as submitted to the Minister, was perfectly outspoken: "It was only with difficulty that he got himself received instead of being driven out of the country; however, he insists that he was requested to continue his correspondence; so there we are back at the same point after three years of scribbling." . . . What was to be done now? Was it desirable, by pursuing the comedy of the false Committee, to persuade the British Government that the Bourbons had a large following in France? Would it not be better to make an end of the correspondence and, at one sweep, to put an end to this wretched agency, so that the relations between France and England should be no other than those of downright honest hostility?"† Note the disdainful tone of Desmarest's

---

Ministers; for this second report was undoubtedly intended for the eyes of Fauche-Borel, and to confirm him in his belief of the Committee's existence. It is headed: "Bourlac's report to the members of the Committee of his mission to London" (*Archives de la Préfecture de Police*, A^A 311). As for the first report, which must have been far more entertaining, for in it the spy expressed without reserve his opinion of Louis XVIII. and the members of the British Cabinet, we have not had the good-fortune to discover it. Fauche-Borel makes one discreet allusion to it (*Mémoires*, iv., 46): "If what is said is true, this narrative, written by this deep-dyed villain of his journey to England and the audience granted him by the King, for the benefit of Bonaparte's police, should be a singular production. My respect for the august author of the Charter compels me to keep silence."

* The *dossier* still retains traces of this scrutiny.

† *Archives nationales*, F^7 6238.

comments to the Minister, and his use of the term "wretched agency," a tone characteristic of the feeling of dislike which the police authorities entertained of their spies in general, and of Perlet in particular. The question was whether Fauche's letters to "his friend in Paris" should be published, in order to convince the British Ministry "of the little reliance to be placed on the men with whom the proscribed Bourbons had surrounded themselves"; but the question was abandoned, and the British Government thenceforth took no interest in the futile rascality of agents. Fouché, moreover, although he was not a member of Perlet's Committee since the Committee had never existed, had, since 1804, been "cultivating English sympathies."* The British Government, like Fauche-Borel himself, was not wholly mistaken in concluding that Fouché was neither the irreconcilable enemy of England nor the faithful friend of Napoleon. It was this very tendency to an Anglo-French understanding that brought about his disgrace. He resigned his post on June 3, 1810, and was replaced by the Duc de Rovigo. Three months later Dubois left the Prefecture to make way for Pasquier, an honest man with a keen sense of duty. A mere chance revealed to the new Prefect the ignoble stratagem of which Perlet was the instrument. Any further exploitation of this demoralising hoax was forbidden: the spy apparently obeyed, but, still hoping to obtain from the British Government, on account of his fantastic Committee, the twenty thousand sterling of his dreams, he continued, unknown to his superiors, and in his own interests, the exchange of letters to Fauche-Borel. For his part, the bookseller clung despairingly to his "Correspondence." It was then 1812, the Empire was tottering, and Fauche, in alarm, lest the restoration of the Bourbons should be effected without his co-operation, boldly decided to spend a day in Paris: twenty-four hours would be enough for one of his shrewdness and experience to obtain the necessary details and stimulate the activity of the Committee. And he could devise nothing better than to address

* Madelin, *Fouché*, ii., 174.

himself to Desmarest—his worst enemy—and to beg of him the indispensable safe-conduct. A respectable Parisian merchant, Gilles by name, who, provided with a passport, frequently crossed the Channel, undertook to place before the chief of the secret police the strange request of the Swiss bookseller, who, in exchange for the required passport, offered to furnish valuable information concerning the plans of the Pretender. He offered to betray the cause of the legitimate Monarchy on condition that he was placed in a position to do them better service.

Desmarest did not reply; Fauche urged Perlet to take action; with the same result. The whole of Europe was in league against Bonaparte: it was the moment to strike the final blow against the vanquished. Fauche, in desperate impatience, waited in Jersey for the Committee to summon him to Paris. But no summons came. And now, confronted by a guilty silence on the part of his beloved Perlet, there must surely have arisen, in the depths of his mind, some shadow of distrust or fear? But, no: his faith was still unbroken. It might even have been increased had he known that Perlet was in prison, a manifest proof of his devotion to the good cause.

For, as a result of the dispatches conveyed by Gilles, Perlet was actually summoned to his presence by Desmarest, who, having "basted" him after the fashion of an experienced cook, wrung from the spy, though not without difficulty, the confession of his deceit. Guilty of continuing the correspondence with England, despite the prohibition of his superiors, he was detained in the prison of Sainte-Pelagie, until some punishment appropriate to his offence could be found in the criminal Code—that crime which a few months earlier was so abundantly rewarded!* Two days

* Reports of the two examinations of Perlet—July 28 and 29, 1839—will be found in the *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6238. In the course of these examinations two questions were asked of Perlet, from which we may infer that the Minister of Police was by no means indifferent to the exchange of confidential information devised by Fauche-Borel: "Do you think that Fauche, though in London he appears to be devoted to the Bourbons, would, never-

later, the Prefect, Pasquier, took advantage of this opportunity to dismiss this unworthy servant.* In vain did Perlet protest that "no one was more devoted to the Emperor than he; and he had always manifested his regret that he was unable to fight by the side of our brave soldiers; and that he had a son, a trumpeter in the Imperial Guard, whom he was always reminding how noble it was to serve a sovereign. . . ."; but the Minister decided that Perlet should be kept in custody "pending the receipt of further information."†

This is why Fauche hastened frantically from Jersey to London, exasperated by the inexplicable silence of his faithful correspondent. Event followed swiftly upon event; in rapid succession men learned of the disastrous defeat of Bonaparte's army at Leipsic, of the sudden descent upon the Rhine of the allied armies, and their invasion of France. At Hartwell House, some forty miles from London, where the "Comte de Lille" was now established, the advance of the forces of the Coalition was anxiously followed in the English newspapers, and every day brought the sudden awakening of hope. The Comte d'Artois and his sons had already left England the better to watch events. Bordeaux was calling for its King. And Paris? Fauche knew not what to think! What was the Committee thinking of, *his* Committee? Why did not this secret and

---

theless, consent to serve the French Government, and that one could rely on any offers of this sort that he might make, and on such documents as he might furnish in order to prove his sincerity? And if Fauche, wishing to give the French Government a proof of his genuine desire to serve it, had already furnished certain information, touching matters that may interest the French Government, do you think that one could regard them with absolute confidence?" Perlet contented himself with replying: "I am not in a position to understand Fauche's character sufficiently to answer for him." But these allusions to Fauche's possible duplicity impressed themselves upon his mind, and at a later date he was to profit by them.

* The same *dossier*. Letter from Perlet announcing his revocation to Desmarest, August 3.

† The same *dossier*, August 19.

powerful agency strike the tyrant the last blow? The tyrant fell, and still the Committee made no sign. In packing his trunk to accompany the King on his return to France, and there to receive the magnificent reward due to his long and eminent services, Fauche-Borel was conscious of a bitter regret that this sudden change should have been brought about without his immediate participation. But he was eager to return to Paris, impatient to question Perlet, to learn the causes of this incomprehensible abstention, and to learn at last, now that nothing could frustrate his vengeance, who it was that had denounced to Bonaparte's police the unfortunate Charles Vitel and received the price of his blood.

CHAPTER VII

FAUCHE DEFLATED

NAPOLEON had succeeded in consummating "the most difficult undertaking of his life—namely, losing his throne."* Early on the morning of Easter Day, before sunrise—on the day when Christians celebrate the Resurrection of the Saviour—a courier from the Prince Regent of England alighted at Hartwell House, which had then for some three years been occupied by Louis XVIII. and his little Court. The Royal messenger brought a dispatch for the "Comte de Lille"; the Comte de Blacas was awakened; he had gone late to bed and was in a profound sleep. The dispatch announced that the French Senate had pronounced for the abdication of Napoleon and the return of the legitimate King; Blacas, lantern in hand, made his way through the narrow, tortuous corridors to the King's chamber, and awakened the King. The joy with which the news was received was described as "suffocating," and the event might, without exaggeration, be classed among those which we describe as miraculous. After twenty-three years of exile and poverty, this Prince, whom the people of France had so completely forgotten that they could not even recall his name, was summoned, with the consent of all the rulers of Europe, to ascend his throne. He himself knew nothing of the country over which he was to reign: and his intimates, what with the flattery general to Courts and pity for his misfortunes, had so long lured and soothed him that he expected to find the French "such as they were in the days of his youth, but made wiser by the harsh lessons of misfortune." He did not understand that these twenty-three years were equivalent to as many centuries.

* Montgaillard, *Souvenirs*, p. 250.

FAUCHE-BOREL

Holding a medallion of his sovereign, the King of Prussia. The busts are those of Louis XVIII. and Condé; the portraits those of Moreau, Pichegru, and Charles Vitel. In the background is the Tower of the Temple.

To face p. 202.

During the term of his exile he was so stubbornly assured of his rights that he now became King on the instant. On the very day when he left Hartwell House for ever, he entered London in the coach of the Prince Regent, driven by postillions clothed in white, through the midst of an exulting crowd, he found at the Hôtel Crillon, which was prepared for his use, a whole Court of peers and pretty women and French *émigrés*, held back by a bodyguard a hundred strong, who, lining either side of the path he was to follow, saluted his passage by dipping their white banners. This impressive pomp, this apotheosis, following, without a break, the petty miseries of his life of exile, might have perturbed another man; but he accepted them as merely his due, and it was in measured terms that he responded to the greetings of his princely host. They exchanged decorations; Louis XVIII. slipping his *cordon bleu* round the Regent's throat, while the Regent, stooping, fastened the Garter round the gouty leg of the new King. On the following day they arrived at Dover, where the very seas held festival; the Straits celebrated the deliverance; an enormous number of small vessels, whose white pennants were snapping at the masthead, surrounded *Le Lys*, which had come from France to bring the King home. The weather was radiant and the crossing quick; and in mid-channel the French Channel Squadron took up its stations about the Royal vessel, which bore not only Louis XVIII. but the more notable of his long-tried companions in exile. On an English yacht, the *Jason*, scudding along in the wake of *Le Lys*, a large number of *émigrés* had taken passage, in their haste to return to France; and among them was Fauche-Borel, who, feeling that the hour of his reward was nigh, had been doing his best to draw attention to himself ever since the exodus from Hartwell House. This was no moment foolishly to allow himself to be overlooked. Already, in London, he had contrived to put himself in the King's way amidst the hurly-burly of the Hôtel Crillon, and to kiss his sovereign's hand; and he had come near to leaping with joy when the King remarked: "I am very pleased to see you." . . . Words to which

Fauche attributed a great deal of meaning. He at once fixed his gaze upon Mme. d'Angoulême, in order that he might lose no time in paying his respects to her; and he hastened to join her party at the very moment when the daughter of Louis XVI., attended by a long train of ladies-in-waiting, had entered the apartments set aside for her; he rushed towards her, and persuaded himself that she saw and recognised him. "I am very pleased to see you," she said. The Duc d'Havré, who was present, warmly complimented the bookseller on "the benevolent attention by which Her Royal Highness had just distinguished him."* If Fauche had been endowed with the penetration he flattered himself he possessed, these two incidents would have enlightened him as to the fragile nature of the favour of princes; unfortunately, exiled princes are by no means extravagant in the matter of courtiers during the years of their exile; and if Fortune once more smiles upon them, they repulse the furious onslaught of those who demand place or favour by forgetfulness, commonplace favours, and indifference.

But such heartbreaking conjectures had never entered Fauche's mind; and while he sailed on towards the coasts of France, while the guns of the squadron thundered their salutes, he was experiencing "the most wonderful day of his life," a day "full of joy which intoxicated his heart"; he believed that the end of all his difficulties was at hand, and that he was about to receive his reward. The directorship of the royal printing press had, in a way, been promised to him long before—promised and confirmed—but Louis XVIII. would not confine himself to this one proof of his munificence; what reward, then, would he add thereto? Some important decoration, that went without saying; but what else? A title? An embassy? And at this very moment, all over France, hundreds and thousands of worthy folk were computing what they had suffered from the Revolution, and were racking their brains to decide what generous compensation would content them; all investors lately ruined by the collapse of the assignats, all the old

* Fauche-Borel, *Mémoires*, iv., 207-8.

servants of the ancient Court, deprived of their employment, all the Chouans, all the soldiers of Charette, La Rochejaquelein, or Cadoudal, all those who the police of Fouché and Rovigo had persecuted, and those who had become compromised by carrying to and fro the secret correspondence of the princes or by managing the Royalist agencies; all those who had lost a relative on the scaffold during the Terror, or the proscriptions in the days of the Directoire, or the wholesale executions under the Empire; all those whose life had been uprooted or their resources diminished by twenty years of warfare and disorder, now set their hopes of reparation or indemnity upon this poor King, who returned, crushed with debts contracted in every country in Europe over a period of nearly twenty-five years.

Soon he was able to make out the jetties of the harbour, the sandhills of the coast, and the walls of Calais, swarming with an innumerable crowd. Long before *Le Lys* had drawn alongside the quay, the air was full of the shouts and cheers of the spectators; the guns were thundering, the trumpets pealing, and the church bells ringing wildly. Louis XVIII., erect upon the bridge of the vessel, bared his head, placed his hand upon his heart, and raised his eyes toward the heavens; this pious gesture, which enabled the crowd to recognise him, was the signal for an outburst of delirious joy; the most enthusiastic being the senior officers who crowded the jetty: generals in the army, magistrates, municipal councillors, all eager to be the first to profess their unshakable attachment to the cause of the Bourbon family; even General Maison had brought thither by forced marches the whole garrison of Lille, in order to testify, without further delay, the ardour of his Royalism. A car was in waiting to which were harnessed sixteen inhabitants of Calais, "richly clad." By them the King was drawn as far as the church, where a *Te Deum* was sung as an act of thanks. Such was the welcome extended to the exile, who, if he had effected a landing a few weeks earlier, would have been hunted, captured, sold, and probably shot, without a voice being raised in his defence.

Fauche-Borel took part in this intoxication, and seized every opportunity of drawing attention to himself. When, on returning from church, Louis alighted from his carriage, his sword caught in the Order of the Garter that surrounded his gouty, swollen knee, and His Majesty, by no means nimble in his movements, had some difficulty in disentangling it; Fauche rushed forward to free the King, to extricate him from this embarrassment; but during the last hour the old etiquette had reconquered all its rights, and seeing this base-born person about to lay hands on the royal sword, or even on the royal leg, the Comte de Blacas was filled with indignation: "What are you doing, Fauche?" he cried, in a tone of angry reprimand. The bookseller, disconcerted, tells us that Louis XVIII. calmed the angry courtier* with a few words, but this was yet another sign that, since leaving Hartwell House, so little removed in point of time, matters had undergone a profound change, and the King's person was henceforth carefully guarded.

On this, well content with his landing on the soil of France, that country in which a price had so long been set upon his head, Fauche set out for Paris. It was a triumphant journey. Along the roads which he had followed nine years earlier, on emerging from the dungeons of Bonaparte, bound with cords and dragged from one military district to another by the myrmidons of the Usurper, he was now the object of obsequious attention from postillions and post-masters wearing the White Cockade. From the air of rapt beatitude which overspread his beaming countenance, the onlookers divined his importance, which indeed he did not seek to conceal. Was it not largely thanks to his efforts and his skilful diplomacy that this beautiful country, now given over to the joys of peace and the good old days that had returned, found itself delivered from the odious tyranny of the Corsican? Lulled by the gentle oscillations of his

* "Do not disturb yourself," the King graciously replied; "it is Fauche who is once more doing me a service." "I could not have arrived in France under happier auspices," Fauche adds (*Mémoires*, iv., 412).

coach, he reflected upon the enviable advantages of his position. How well he had shaped his life, and how thankful he was to have left his little bookshop in the Rue de l'Hôpital, to launch himself upon the life adventurous! The King of France, the Prince Regent, the King of Prussia were amongst those who were under obligations to him, and he was assured of their lasting confidence in him. In his valise he had dispatches addressed by Jacobi, the Prussian Ambassador in England, to King Frederic William, then in Paris. He knew the secrets of all the Cabinets of Europe, and his portfolios were stuffed with marks of esteem from all those whose names were known in the world of diplomacy: so many Bills of Exchange upon the victors of the day. A magnificent future loomed before him. . . . And at that very moment, how many worthy citizens were, like Fauche, calculating the infallible profits of the symbolical crock of milk, the fragile basis of their ambition!

On reaching Paris, the moment his dispatches had been delivered to the King of Prussia, Fauche-Borel hastened to call upon Perlet, who fell upon his neck with a loud cry of "Vive le Roi!" Perlet was mad with joy; "he, too," he said, "had been living, since the fall of the tyrant, the happiest hours of his life." What an overflow of emotion! Perlet could not bear the idea that his good friend Fauche should stay anywhere but in his own quarters, and Fauche, touched by this affectionate welcome, gladly accepted the invitation. We see him, then, installed in the Rue du Pont-de-Lodi, in the set of rooms in which Perlet was living with his daughter Caroline, now nearly twenty years of age.* This pleasant intimacy made it easier for the two friends to indulge in heart to heart talks; they had so much to say to one another! Perlet was at last able to unburden his heart, and to explain, why he was forced, eight months earlier, to interrupt his letters to Fauche. He told him how the

* Perlet was then a widower. "I have no longer a mother," wrote Caroline Perlet to the Minister, on November 29, 1813 (*Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6238).

Imperial police, informed by some traitor of his importance in Royalist circles, had set a trap for him, in which he was taken: how he was arrested, imprisoned, and interrogated by the Government's most cunning and experienced cross-questioners, yet had sufficient moral strength to divulge none of the secrets of the party, and to remain as deaf to the threats of the police as to all attempts to corrupt him. He knew that the Usurper intended to have his head, and was preparing to die for the noblest of all causes, when in the depths of his dungeon cell he learned of the Allied victory and the fall of Bonaparte. The political prisoners, detained, like himself, at Sainte-Pélagie, revolted at his instigation, demanding to be set at liberty. Needless to say, he was the very first to sport a white cockade, and the whole prison resounded with his cries: "Long live the King! Down with the tyrant!" He owed his liberation to the Tsar Alexander, to whom the prisoners addressed a petition, and who, as master of Paris, immediately ordered that these worthy persecuted Royalists should be set at liberty.* And from that time onward, Perlet, delirious with joy at the sight of his dream come true, did nothing but run about Paris preaching hatred of the Corsican, praising the foreign soldiery, distributing the proclamation of Louis XVIII., doing his utmost to increase the popularity of the Bourbons, and endeavouring by every means to make himself useful to his King. Fauche, overcome with emotion, listened to this interesting story. He was filled with awe-struck admiration for this venerable man who, under the very noses

* Paris, April 1, 1814, Report on the Prisons: "At Sainte-Pelagie we found those imprisoned for debt and the convicted prisoners in a state of absolute revolt; a great number of them were wearing white ribbons and cockades. The prison was ringing with shouts of 'Long live the King! Down with the tyrant! . . .' We persuaded them to write to His Imperial Majesty, the Tsar of Russia, who at present possesses absolute authority." The same date: "In pursuance of the proclamations of His Imperial Majesty, the Tsar Alexander, the doorkeeper of Sainte-Pelagie will immediately set at liberty the following prisoners, unless they are imprisoned for debt: . . . Perlet, Charles Frederic, in custody since July 28, 1813" (*Archives de la Préfecture de Police*, A^A 418, exhibit 156).

of the Imperial Police, had contrived to organise the supporters of Royalty, and to form them into a secret Committee, and who, the victim of his own zeal, had heroically defied the despot even when in irons. Not for a moment did the simple Fauche suspect that his comrade was embellishing his narrative in the most outrageous fashion; and he had yet to realise that in great political upheavals, the greater a man's servility while employed by a fallen dynasty, the more conspicuous his denial of it. There were, alas! in those days, many notable examples of such baseness; but the most characteristic and the most audacious of these sudden revulsions was that of a person of whose diabolical face we caught a glimpse in the first few pages of this history: the Comte de Montgaillard. For more than twenty years this man had sold all those from whom he took his wages; he betrayed Condé, destroyed Pichegru, deceived d'Antraigues, denounced Fauche, acted as a Royalist spy, and under the Directoire became an informer; and in order to win the favour of the First Consul he stooped to accomplish the vilest tasks for the police; he accepted money from every party and every quarter, but was always overwhelmed with debts, and was always seeking to "re-establish himself" by speculating in this or the other commodity, or by betraying some victim to the authorities. All but drowning in his own filth, he was rescued by Napoleon, who enlisted him among his secret informers, in which position, distrusted by all, he was closely supervised, so that he needed but to disregard a single summons and the watchers were on his trail, so great was the fear that he might accomplish some fresh betrayal, and his repeated protestations to the master who despised, yet employed him, are shocking in their base significance.* It was this Montgaillard who was

* The *dossier* F^{7} 6431, in the *Archives nationales*, was apparently not utilised by M. Clément de Lacroix, the author of the *Souvenirs du Comte Montgaillard*, discovered and published by him in 1895. This *dossier* reveals in a most remarkable fashion Montgaillard's infamous character. In Ventôse, year IV., from Hamburg, he was protesting the purity of his devotion to the interests of the Republic. In Nivôse, of the same year, he denounced Fauche-Borel, whom he

the first to bring himself to the notice of Louis XVIII. when the latter arrived at Compiègne, and, with truly Satanic impudence, remarked in a casual tone, to the King whom he had ridiculed and slandered so often with his pen: "Your Majesty has too much sense of humour not to have understood me! . . ." Then and there he began to sing the praises of the Bourbons with no less enthusiasm than he had lauded the virtues of Bonaparte;* he was given immediate employment, and in close collaboration with Louis XVIII. he wrote a pamphlet, a manifesto, a model of petulant recantation,† and as long as the much-desired King was

---

had himself led astray. In Pluviôse he declared himself ready to prove to the world the treachery of Pichegru, in whose treachery he himself had played a leading part. In Prairial of the year XIII. he states, in a letter to Réal, that he denies his own kinsfolk, "having blushed more than once in that I was born in a class to which all my enemies belong, because I have never been guilty of their vices." In 1810, being then imprisoned for debt, he offered the Minister of Police to do no matter what if only he were granted his liberty and a pension. The same year he was engaged as political spy by the Emperor, when he expressed himself as being "only too happy to devote his life to that august service. Above all, His Majesty loves men of honour, and I am all honour . . ." His debts were paid, they amounted to 78,417 francs 45 centimes; and he was granted a pension of 14,000 francs. At the Restoration he explained how, from 1801 to 1814, he had been "the captive of, or under the almost immediate supervision of, the man who had seated himself upon the throne of France."

* Clément de Lacroix, 61. The interview between Louis XVIII. and Montgaillard, would seem to have taken place on April 29 (*Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6901^{B}).

† *De la Restoration de la Monarchie des Bourbons et du Retour à l'Ordre*, 1814. Here is the opening passage: "He has attained the goal which was the object of the conspiracies of Pichegru and Moreau; the undertaking to which I devoted my life, and for which I staked the honour of my name. I have lived long enough to see the aims of these generals realised, to witness the recall of my sovereign, of the return of my legitimate princes to the throne of Saint-Louis." Montgaillard then explained that the only way of ridding the world of Bonaparte was "to urge him towards the excessive," which was why he, Montgaillard, had apparently "to attach himself inseparably to the cause, the purpose, and the dynasty of the Usurper." "I divined the secret of his heart; he was dreaming of the crown, and

on the throne he was untouched by any form of reprisals; he was petted and made use of; he was well-paid, and allowed to boast of the purity of his heart, yet no one smiled, no one expressed his indignation.

Perlet was not the man to succeed in cutting a caper of this sort; moreover, he would have risked breaking his neck for no adequate reason, since the ingenuous vanity of Fauche-Borel was even easier to fool than the credulous subtlety of Louis XVIII. Although he now had the librarian under his own roof, Perlet, led away by an epistolary imagination, preferred writing to talking, and on May 2, the day before the King's entry into Paris, he inflicted on his "faithful friend" the reading of a long letter, in which he gave a general account of the notable services which he had performed for the King whom Paris was about to *fête*. This pathetic though declamatory supplication: "Lord God, Thou Who dost read the secrets of our hearts, Thou Who dost know the heart of him who speaks to Thee, before Thee I swear that I have always been faithful to my lawful King. . . . Punish me, Lord, if I do not speak the truth!" Anybody but Fauche would have thought these were high-sounding but very useless phrases, but he was so sure of his man that he was not in the least surprised; and when the King was in residence at the Tuileries, he did not hesitate to introduce Perlet to the Comte de Blacas, who was then Louis's Grand Master of the Wardrobe and Minister of the Household, and to beg that the Royal favour should be extended to this precious acolyte of their lean years. He seems to have believed that his credit was unlimited, and that he could squander it without counting

---

I decided to place it on his head. . . . Fidelity to the King made this a duty." We almost wonder, with M. de Lacroix, whether there was not between the King and Montgaillard some "unconfessed complicity"; for the man knew so many secrets, and had played his part in so many intrigues . . . "Perhaps his quiver still held some terrible shaft"; perhaps he had at some time been "the intermediary in some shady and dubious plan which it would be impolitic and scandalous to reveal."

what he spent. Moreover, the part of patron and protector gave him pleasure, and in advancing Perlet he was able to take pride in having discovered so enterprising a proselyte; however, when the new Government had begun to work, Fauche thought it was time to make the acquaintance of the members of the Committee, whose names were still unknown to him, and to introduce them to the Royal favour, but Perlet flatly refused to reveal these names; in vain did his colleague show him, in the plainest possible fashion, that these men had no longer anything to fear from the Usurper; their cause had triumphed, and it was just that they should receive the due reward of their loyalty. But Perlet remained dumb; a solemn oath compelled him to silence, and until *those gentlemen* themselves relieved him of his oath, he shrank from committing such an indiscretion. Fauche wondered at scruples of so exigent a nature; but not wishing to be outdone in the matter of delicacy, he did not further insist. For that matter, it was of no great importance now to know which of the marshals, senators, or high officials of the Imperial Court had longed for the return of their lawful King while still beneath the tyrant's rod; nowadays one had only to choose, for all the senators, all the marshals, all the Court officials with very few exceptions, were elbowing one another in the waiting-rooms of the Tuileries, overwhelming with abuse that Bonaparte who had forced them to receive his favours. Perlet had not exaggerated; he had even told less than the actual truth in assuring Fauche and others that a group of eminent persons was working to restore the King. A group? Rather was it the whole of France, that now flattered itself that its prayers had recalled Louis to the throne, so that it was difficult to undertand how the Corsican, without a follower, had maintained himself in power so long.

Convinced of Perlet's veracity in this respect, Fauche attacked the other problem, which was one of personal interest only: "Who had betrayed Charles Vitel, and what had become of the 600 louis sent from London by Fauche, at Perlet's request, to save the unhappy ensign from the

claws of the police ?" Thus questioned, Perlet could not refuse to reply: " Vitel's murderer was Inspector-General Veyrat. Having caught the young man in a trap he surrendered him to the Military Commission, in order to steal the miserable sum in the possession of Fauche's messenger, and likewise the 600 louis intended for Vitel's ransom." And suddenly Perlet began to enlarge on the crimes of " that monster Veyrat." Compelled to work in harness with this wretch, in order to assure the unimpeded operations of the Committee, it was only by smothering him with gold that Perlet was able to make sure of his assistance. For three years Perlet never ceased to warn the Prefect, Pasquier, that this " execrable creature " was the most dangerous of traitors; but Pasquier was afraid of Veyrat and did not dare to dismiss him. With shudders of retrospective remembrance, Perlet told details of the atrocious things which he had suffered at the hands of this infamous man. Any other than he would have renounced the great undertaking to which he had sacrificed his life, so hateful to him was the forced complicity of this utter scoundrel. Only the ardour of his Royalism sustained him through this terrible ordeal. Fauche, deeply moved, did his best to comfort Perlet. Had not the hour of vengeance sounded at last for honest men ? They mutually agreed never to rest until Veyrat had expiated his crime, even though they had to seek for him in " the bowels of the earth."*

Without going as far as the bowels of the earth Veyrat had disappeared, as Perlet very well knew. On the arrival of the Comte d'Artois in Paris—he preceded the King by three weeks—the Prefect, Pasquier, regarding Veyrat as " capable of any treachery," and being no longer afraid to attack him, sent for him, and handed him a passport with the injunction to leave by nine o'clock the next morning. Veyrat bowed and said not a word. That night an express messenger from the Tuileries awoke the Prefect and handed him a dispatch, demanding him on the authority of His Royal Highness, Monsieur, Lieutenant-General of the

* Fauche-Borel, *Mémoires*, iv., 218, 220.

Kingdom, "to cease all proceedings against M. Veyrat." And thus Pasquier learned that his Inspector-General excelled, like so many others, in the art of turning his coat, and now, having undergone a moult, the avowed servant of the Usurper had become an enthusiastic Royalist, and in the space of twenty-four hours had contrived to find anchorage in the service of the Bourbons, and was now as firmly attached thereto as he had been to that of Bonaparte! Before seven o'clock in the morning the Prefect called at the château, armed with his resignation. The Prince received him with embarrassment, excusing himself as is the wont of Princes; nevertheless, he did not venture to plead the cause of the informer. Pasquier returned to the Prefecture, where Veyrat was reinstalling himself "with an air of the greatest triumph." He was once more ordered to leave Paris; and that very day, and this time he was forced to obey.* This was why Perlet set Fauche upon his track, knowing that the bookseller would give tongue without sufficient cause; to speak the language of *vénerie*, he would *clabauder*—that is, would give tongue without having found the scent. Vengeance is a dish that is easily kept warm; moreover, Fauche was eager not to lose the opportunity of following his sovereign, the King of Prussia, to England, now that the treaty was signed. Accordingly he set forth in the early days of June. From London Frederic William went to Neuchâtel to resume possession of his principality, and Fauche-Borel accompanied him thither, nothing loth to show himself to his fellow-townsmen as one familiar with the pomp and circumstance of Royalty. It was nearly thirteen years since he had seen his native city; but he says not a word of the delight which he should have felt on returning to his ancient house in the Rue de l'Hôpital, and on finding completed his new house in the *faubourg*, whose foundations he laid in the autumn of 1801. Not a single word does he say of his wife, who had lived so many years alone, the only daughter left to her having married in England. Fauche was not one to linger

* Pasquier, *Mémoires*, ii., 388-9.

over conjugal effusions; as he saw himself he was far too eminent a person to waste his time on such commonplaces. He speaks of his posting-chaise, of the illuminations of the town, of dispatches forwarded through him to his Prussian Majesty, but of his home, so long deserted, not a syllable.

In the *Souvenirs* of Hyde de Neuville there is one very striking episode; it was during the time of the Consulate: Hyde was travelling to England, making the crossing on a small vessel in company with Georges Cadoudal. The night was dark, the sea angry; great clouds were sailing across the sky, uncovering a number of stars, which quickly disappeared; the two passengers, despite the cold and the tossing of the boat, were sleeping restlessly, waking from moment to moment. Suddenly Georges raised himself on his elbow, and calling Hyde with his powerful voice: "Do you know," he said, " what we ought to advise the King to do; we ought to tell him that he ought to have both of us shot, for we shall never be anything but conspirators. We have taken the imprint." Well! Fauche, in the twenty years of his fantastic diplomacy had taken the imprint of intrigue; and now, barely three months after the triumph of the party to which he had attached himself, the lack of intrigue condemned him to idleness. Consequently he profited by his holiday in Switzerland, by collecting alarming information as regards the Island of Elba and the doing of the Bonapartist party. Highly pleased with himself, he no sooner had returned to Paris than he sent to Court the result of his enquiry; this time, alas! it failed to please anybody: Louis XVIII., in the Tuileries even more than at Mitau, could not bear to have his quietude disturbed. More thoughtless even than it was his wont to be, or because of an innate need of mystification, Fauche attempted to rally Barras to the cause of the Bourbons; an ill-judged undertaking, which, under the then circumstances, merely lowered him to the rank of a second-rate busybody. And indeed, if he played any part at all in this attempted reconciliation, it was merely that of

mediator,* by which he diminished himself without realising the fact. And while he was amusing himself with such trifles, Perlet was spreading his net.

We may imagine that while Perlet was employed in the secretarial department of the Prefecture, he did not neglect to take the precaution of inspecting Fauche-Borel's *dossier*, and of obtaining information, through Veyrat, or some other, as to the notes on the same individual contained in the files of the Ministry of Police. He knew of the existence of that appeal in which the bookseller, in 1804, then imprisoned in La Force and threatened with the scaffold, had offered his services to the Imperial Police, proposing to sell to the Chief Justice the secrets of the exiled Princes. Perlet had not forgotten the somewhat discreditable causes of his arrest in 1813, after the visit of a certain M. Gilles, who, according to his own account of himself, was acting as intermediary between Fauche and Desmarest. With all this mass of facts to draw upon, Perlet concluded that it would not be difficult to parry the blow with which he was threatened, when, as must inevitably happen before long, the hoax of the sham Committee should come to light, and his criminal participation in the assassination of Vitel. It was enough to discreetly spread the rumour that Fauche-Borel, so prodigal of protestations of his devotion to his beloved King, had been in the pay of Bonaparte's police only ten years earlier; he had appeared such a zealous Royalist only to discover the better the intentions of the Princes, to sell them at a higher profit, and the pigeon-holes of the Prefecture contained the proofs of his infamy. In the event of a tempestuous explanation, if Fauche ran the risk of revealing Perlet's imposture, Perlet would reply by denouncing the treason of Fauche, and in order to ensure the effect of his countermine when at last the explosion should occur, he began, in secret, to spread the rumour of the bookseller's

* It is curious to compare the description of these negotiations in Fauche-Borel's *Mémoires*, iv., 250 *et seq.*, in which Fauche appears to control everything, with Barras's account of these negotiations, in which Fauche does not appear at all (*Mémoires*, iv., 265 *et seq.*).

treachery. Fauche would be in no position to deny this accusation; for even though he had never betrayed the Bourbons, and had never dreamed of doing so, he had more than once elected to play a most dangerous game with Desmarest, and in the course of his protracted manœuvres he had, in his presumptuous incompetence, assumed so many masks, and employed such clumsy expedients and imprudent subterfuges, had been so rash and proved himself such a blunderer, that he had laid himself open to every kind of insinuation, and, should a day of accounting come, he would find it impossible to show clean hands and a spotless reputation.

Perlet's treacherous strategy was therefore founded upon expert knowledge; and there is some reason to believe that he was advised to adopt it by the devilish and Machiavellic Montgaillard, who could not forgive Fauche for having deprived him of the pecuniary profit of the Pichegru negotiations, and still cherished the humiliating merit of the squabble which had ended their relations. From the time of his first entry into "diplomacy," Fauche—as far as it is possible to understand the mysteries of a system of book-keeping whose obscurity was intentional—had received from England sums whose total certainly exceeded half a million francs,* to which we may, without exceeding the bounds of prudence, add several thousands of pounds sterling, which passed through his hands on the occasion of various settlements of accounts, from which we may presume that he derived some personal profit. If he banked money without counting it, he spent it in the same fashion; one does not cross Europe fifteen or twenty times without leaving a good deal of money on the road; for wherever he was, Fauche liked to live luxuriously; in London his temporary

* We have already calculated—approximately, of course—his profits from the Pichegru affair. After this he received—by his own admission—on leaving the Temple, 36,000 francs; a pension of 7,200 francs for eight years; at the time of the Vitel affair 12,400 francs; to which we must add part of the 300,000 francs which passed through his hands when the accounts of the "English Correspondence" were balanced.

home was replete with every comfort; and if he proved niggardly in respect of the allowance made to his wife, who was living parsimoniously at Neuchâtel, he also displayed the magnificence of a multi-millionaire when persons of greater note were in question; thus, learning that Louis XVIII. had signed, in the earlier days of his emigration, a note of 174,600 francs, a debt which he feared might become troublesome, Fauche, in 1801, redeemed the document, pledging himself not to demand either capital or interest until the King should reascend his throne.* Now, in the autumn of 1814, the restoration was already a history of six months' date, and Fauche was the more inclined to remember this old debt, in that he found himself short of money, and what with the capital and the accumulated interest the total amount of the debt had increased to 365,700 francs. In default of the directorship of the National Press and the Knighthood of Saint Michael, long promised and still awaited, this sum would, for the time being, have been welcomed, and Fauche ventured to ask for its payment through the medium of M. de Blacas, Minister of the King's Household. His request was received with singular and alarming coldness; Perlet's insinuations had already begun to do their work. Fauche, who as yet had no understanding of the lack of enthusiasm displayed in rewarding, or at least repaying, the veteran champion of the Monarchy, which he prided himself on being, ventured to insist, begged for an audience of the King, failed to obtain it, attempted to see the Ministers, was shown the door, wrote report upon report, without obtaining a reply . . . in short, he was in disgrace. The doors of the Tuileries, which he had thought to enter as a familiar guest, and one possessed of every kind of influence, in his quality of tried friend, faithful despite misfortune—these doors were closed against him, and he could

* This speculation was not wholly a matter of chivalry. Fauche redeemed the note for 120,000 francs, paying it not in money, but in merchandise—that is, in books, to be selected by the creditor, at prices marked in his MS. catalogue, from his warehouses in Berlin and Hamburg, and his various correspondents. Interest was calculated at 5 per cent. (*Mémoires*, ii., 263; iv., 239).

not discover—or so he tells us—the cause of his disgrace. And Perlet was becoming exacting. He complained that he was the dupe of Fauche, that he had sacrificed his fortune and risked his life to maintain a correspondence for which he was never paid, all the profits being absorbed by the rapacious Fauche! An explanation became necessary; it could no longer be a friendly one; it took place before witnesses, before a magistrate. Fauche indignantly apostrophised the "faithful friend" of other days. "Speak, Perlet, speak! Tell us in what exorbitant expenses your correspondence with me involved you, and who were the members of your 'Royal Committee'?" But Perlet, stammering at first, soon recovered his self-possession. "I cannot consent to divulge these names *to you.* Prudence forbids me." And he left the Court like a man haunted by a hideous nightmare, leaving in the minds of the witnesses and magistrates the memory of this equivocal allusion to shameful mysteries. Everybody understood it; except Fauche, and it was left for chance to open his eyes.

As he was pressed for more, it occurred to him to recover the sum of £180 sterling deposited by Vitel in 1807 in Hottinger's bank. Having consulted his books, the banker informed Fauche that ten days after the ensign's death the sum had been requisitioned by the Prefecture of Police. Fauche then repaired to the Rue de Jerusalem, and begged for an interview with Comte Beugnot, the successor of Baron Pasquier. He was received with consideration, but he had spoken only a few words when Beugnot interrupted him, in a tone of commiseration: "I regret, Monsieur Fauche, to inform you that you have been dealing with the most atrocious of rascals. Perlet sold your unhappy nephew and has made you pay for the crime." So saying, Beugnot produced from a portfolio three letters written by the informer Perlet to the Prefect of Police, Dubois, and these letters he lay before his visitor. In them the whole of the hideous plot was revealed.* Fauche felt "his heart break within him"; at the sight of this handwriting, with which

* Lombard de Langres, *Mémoires pour Fauche-Borel.*

he was so familiar, he remained voiceless, stricken, stupefied, unable to believe " that human perversity could go so far." And his natural indignation was doubtless accompanied by the sudden and humiliating certainty of his own downfall. At this unforeseen blow his whole life was shattered; gone was his reputation as a skilful politician, a perspicacious and far-sighted man of affairs; all England, Switzerland, Prussia, and France would burst out laughing at this wary diplomatist, who, while professing familiarity with the darkest secrets of State, had allowed himself, for eight years, to be fooled by a rascally trickster of the crudest character, who had not a shadow of authority behind him.

And this is why Fauche, despite the evidence, could not resign himself to the admission that he had been made a fool of; he still hoped that there might have been some misunderstanding, some inextricable imbroglio of which Perlet was the innocent victim. Thus, when he learned of the arrival in Paris of Veyrat, recalled from exile by Dandré, who had followed Beugnot in the direction of the Prefecture, he hurried off to the Hôtel de Hollande, in the Rue des Bons Enfants, where the ex-Inspector had just alighted. Fauche surprised him in the act of removing his boots, refused to give his name, and seeing that the police officer, astonished by his behaviour, was inclined to remain on his guard, he explained that the object of his call was not recrimination, but merely to obtain positive information, concerning the arrest and condemnation of Charles Vitel, for which, according to Perlet, Veyrat was wholly responsible. Veyrat very coldly replied that having but that moment arrived, he had not yet had time to unstrap his luggage; if Fauche would have the goodness to return half an hour later he would then be able to look through the complete *dossier* of the affair and form his own judgment from the original documents. Half an hour later Fauche reappeared, and Veyrat drew from his valise a thick sheaf of documents, whose presence in his luggage he proceeded to explain: he had removed them from the portfolio of the " Perlet affair," when Baron Pasquier ordered him to hand him all

the documents touching the spies' correspondence to Fauche and his mission to England. Familiar with Perlet's duplicity and foreseeing some act of treachery, Veyrat subtracted such documents as conduced to his personal justification; and here they were; and the whole hideous intrigue was once more rehearsed before the unhappy Fauche, now a broken man, whose miserable stupefaction was increased by the perusal of each familiar page. Here were Perlet's first letters, begging his dear friend Veyrat to find him some means of earning a livelihood; his first reports, the beginning of his correspondence with Fauche, the wretched man's incessant demands for money, his obsequious thanks, and his protests of absolute obedience to the Minister's orders. Fauche saw, corrected by the hand of the Prefect, or Desmarest, or even Fouché, the rough draft of those letters which he had been so overjoyed to receive in London, and which had soothed the exiled King with deceptive hopes. Here, still in Perlet's hand, was the denunciation of Vitel, Perlet urging the recipient to see that the unhappy victim should have no chance to escape; here was advice as to his arrest and examination; here, too, were letters addressed by the spy, during his mission to London, to his superiors; and here were still more demands for money, still more commonplace remarks. . . . Veyrat, pitiless, spared poor Fauche nothing; and the bookseller left him feeling that eight years of his life had been spent in imitating the astrologer in the fable, who, observing the heavens, stumbled, and found himself at the bottom of a well.

He had at least one very slight consolation: if he had been duped it was by the most skilful, the most celebrated officers of the French police, not by a mere *agent provocateur:* Dubois, Desmarest, Fouché himself must have devised the trap intended to take him. A little cheered by this flattering discovery, he resolved to call up in each of these master minds, in order to obtain from them a few consoling details; and there was no lack of such. Dubois admitted his part in the correspondence. "It is not surprising," he said, "that you should have been struck by certain details proving

that Perlet was really directed by persons fully informed as to all that was happening." Desmarest, who since the fall of Napoleon had been living on a country estate in the neighbourhood of Compiègne, where his leisure was occupied in botanising, and who was visited by Fauche in his retirement—Desmarest flattered himself that the snare was skilfully planned, and that even the most wary must have walked into it: "My post gave me the opportunity of seeing many scoundrels; but I never knew a monster of quite the temper of Perlet." And he added: "When it was decided that your nephew Vitel was to be put to death, there was a question whether, before shooting him, he should not be requested to write to you informing you that your presence in Paris was indispensable; in that case your death would have followed as a certainty; but Fouché, having remarked that one victim was enough in a family, the plan was not carried out": a confidence whose unexpected result was to compel Fauche to end his visit to this eternal enemy by expressing his thanks. Later he called on Fouché, and he has drawn a striking portrait of this pale-faced man, the red of whose bloodshot eyes was the only touch of colour in his sallow countenance; a spectre, draped in a white dressing-gown, reached through a secret door in the wall. The great police-officer treated Fauche almost as an equal, and, like the other two, congratulated him, in that he was still alive: "I have caused you a great deal of trouble; but if I had done to you all that I was ordered to do, you would not now be alive."* These remarks enable us to guess that the bookseller would have had some backing in his conflict with Perlet; matters were beginning to look exciting when the rumour was suddenly spread that Bonaparte, escaped from the island of Elba, had passed through Grenoble, and was marching on Paris. The Government of the Bourbons crumbled to pieces even more quickly than it had been built; Paris, swarming with country gentlemen and veteran Chouans and ruined *émigrés*, who had come to lay siege to

* Fauche-Borel, *Mémoires*, for interview with Desmarest, iv., 22; with Dubois, iv., 284; with Fouché, iv., 388.

the Government departments and obtain their reward for opposing the Usurper, was emptied in twelve hours, as though by the suction of an air-pump. Fauche-Borel set off by posting-carriage, to halt only in Vienna, bearing dispatches from the Russian Minister in Paris to the members of the Vienna Congress, which was then sitting; and as the tale of his misadventures had not preceded him, he was able to pose as a person of importance in this assembly of eminent diplomatists. If what he has written in his *Mémoires* is not mere boasting, or the result of an itching desire to rehabilitate himself, it was high time that he arrived, for the Congress had lost its bearings, and it is a wonder to see with what skill the infatuated Fauche marshals his facts and arranges the most trivial circumstances in order that he may still figure as a person of importance. He is lodged in the house of the Archduke Charles and invited to dinner by the Prince de Hardenberg, who places him on his right, and he does not forget to state that "all the Ambassadors present in Vienna were at this dinner;" and a lively discussion enabled the sometime friend of Perlet once more to save the Bourbon dynasty, to persuade Europe to decide in their favour; he was invited to write a report on the situation; the Archduke asked him for advice, and was never weary of listening to it; Fauche was received at the table of Talleyrand as an intimate friend; and finally the King of Prussia wished to see him, and commissioned him to convey to Louis XVIII., "wherever he may have taken refuge," the pledge of all the Allied sovereigns that they would not lay down their arms until they had re-established the Bourbons in their rightful place. And here, again, Fauche is up in the clouds: could he have dreamed of a happier return to the threshold of Louis XVIII., that poor dispossessed monarch yet once more following the roads of exile? No accusation, even were it justified, could weigh against the happy news of which Fauche was to be the welcome bearer.

He set forth* on his journey, making first for Belgium,

* Fauche reached Vienna on March 23, and left on April 14.

where he supposed the Court of France to be established for the moment. He would appear before it as a saviour, bearing the announcement that Europe in its entirety was ready to band itself against the fugitive from Elba. Are we to accept as the truth the version of the man to whom Fauche, later, attributed all his misfortunes—de Blacas ? His penetration was not infallible, but his loyalty cannot be doubted; and here is the truth: Fauche went bowling along the highway to Brussels, exulting with joy at the thought that he had in his pocket that which would comfort the dispossessed monarch and also ensure his own return to favour. His journey occupied a week. In the solitude of his post-chaise, always on the alert, always calculating and contriving, always preoccupied with his future conduct, he could not resist his longing to learn the terms of the autograph letter, written by the King of Prussia, of which he was the bearer; he unsealed it and read:

"SIRE AND COUSIN,

"The circumstances which have led your Majesty a second time to leave your kingdom and your capital are the result of perfidy and treachery beyond all conception; but if Providence helps the Allies, I do not doubt that we shall a second time succeed in enabling the French nation to recall its lawful sovereign. As for my personal feelings, they are not new to you, Sire and cousin, and I am happy to remind you of them.

"FREDERIC WILLIAM."

Now between the text of this letter and the signature, a blank space, which pained Fauche-Borel's eye, an expert in the "make-up" of the printed or written page. He felt that His Prussian Majesty might just as well have filled this space by a few amiable words in praise of the faithful emissary to whom the missive was confided, and, after long meditation, he decided to supply the lack. At one of the places where he broke his journey for the night, he took it upon himself to add, doing his best to imitate the hand-

writing of his sovereign, a few words which had no bearing upon the general sense of the letter, but which might be of the greatest profit to him. As now amended the letter ended thus:

"As for my personal feelings, they are not new to you, Sire and Cousin, and I am happy to remind you of them by the man who has already served you so well, Fauche-Borel, who can tell Your Majesty that which will interest him.

"FREDERIC WILLIAM."

Fauche, as inexpert in drafting documents as in questions of grammar, had no idea that his sentence was badly constructed, and did not fit the sentence which it was supposed to complete; to him it was wholly satisfactory, in despite of its ungrammatical clumsiness;* he refolded the letter, resealed it, and continued upon his way, confident that this praise from the pen of a powerful ally would have the value of a formal recommendation, and would at last assure him of that audience which for nearly a year had been refused. At Brussels he learned that the Court of France was at Ghent; he went thither immediately, and straightway demanded speech with the King. He was received by his "enemy," M. de Blacas, who, cold as a block of ice, heard him out and commanded, in a tone of reprimand: "Put your dispatches there: I will see to forwarding them. . . ." Fauche objected, insisting warmly that he must be admitted, must be allowed to present the King of Prussia's letter in person, and explain to His Majesty the favourable intentions of the Vienna Congress, from which he had just come: "I have told you that I will forward your dispatches," dryly responded Blacas, who had certainly been warned against Fauche, and the bookseller went his way, with bowed head, to the posting-house. Already there was

* I have not been able to discover, in the *dossiers* relating to the cause of the Bourbons, the original letter, although it should be there; but I think it is enough to examine the text, so ingenuously provided by Fauche himself, to determine where the Royal message ends and where the courier's addition begins.

someone—a stranger—waiting to demand his passport. Fauche produced it; the unknown examined it, turned down a corner and returned it, with this annotation: *Return immediately to Brussels.* The stupefied bookseller's reply was sublime: "Doubtless, Monsieur, you are under a misapprehension: *I am Fauche-Borel*"—"And I," said the other, "am the Minister of Police." It was indeed Baron d'Eksteins, the sworn vassal of Blacas, and entrusted by him with the policing of Ghent. The unhappy Fauche bethought himself desperately; if the doors of the King's palace remained closed upon him it was all over with him: he would lose the best and the last opportunity of returning to favour and of triumphing over the calumnies of Perlet. He hurried round the apartments of the Duc de Duras, the Comte de Jaucourt, and Chateaubriand; they heard him and sympathised, and took their leave of him; and two gendarmes followed him wherever he went, never losing sight of him; he drew up a solemn protest which he wished, himself, to place in His Majesty's hands; he returned to the hotel in the Rue des Champs, then occupied by Louis XVIII., and posted himself in the corridor, and awaited His Majesty's appearance; but the gendarmes who had remained in the waiting-room became impatient, and demanded the custody of his person, the result being loss of temper, a squabble, and a scuffle. Fauche was shown off the premises by the captain of the bodyguard, thrust out of doors and through the gate, and handed over to the impetuous Baron Eksteins, who, reinforced by fifteen caribineers with drawn swords, threw Fauche into a carriage which bore him off to Brussels, without even giving him time to return to the inn to fetch his cloak and other personal effects.

On the evening of April 27 a halt was called at Aloust, Brussels was reached on the following day; Fauche was received at the principal police-station by a very pleasant official, who immediately opened the door of a filthy, crowded prison, in which the greater number of prisoners were compelled to remain standing day and night; and Fauche, secretly thrown into this cesspit, was kept there for nine

days. He escaped from it by the intervention of the Prussian Minister, and learned that Louis XVIII. had warned the Government of the Netherlands of "the regrettable conduct of M. Fauche-Borel, who was guilty of the most serious misdemeanours." And Blacas accentuated this unfavourable report in these terms: "M. Fauche-Borel opened and falsified a letter addressed by the King of Prussia to the King of France, of which he was the bearer. He is one of Bonaparte's spies." Upon this Fauche received a passport, and was ordered to leave the territory of the Netherlands within forty-eight hours.

Is it really the fact that Fauche, hoping to contrive an interview with Louis XVIII. that should have restored him to favour, dared to add to the Royal letter a piece of embroidery of his own fabrication? It is highly probable: for we find in this procedure, in addition to his presumptuous frivolity, that childish and clumsy subterfuge which he always confounded with diplomatic subtlety, and had erected into a system. Moreover, we do not find that he raised any very vigorous protest against this accusation; he made haste to leave the Netherlands, not without having addressed report after report to various eminent personages, and reappeared in Vienna on May 7. We have the right to suppose that had he been innocent he would at at once have appealed to the King of Prussia, begging him to make known his vindication of the charge; an easy task, since the authentic copy of the incriminated letter must assuredly exist in the Archives of His Majesty's Cabinet. But no: for nearly a fortnight he was silent, breaking forth into grandiloquent but purposely vague phrases only when Frederic William had received a reply from Louis XVIII., which contained the following postscript, far more definite than Fauche's interpolation:

"As for M. Fauche-Borel, it is true that for many years he possessed our confidence; but we seem to remember having read, in the records of the Paris Police, that he was then in the service of Bonaparte, that he contributed notes inimical to Prussia, and in England was guilty of deceit."

Fauche none the less asserts that he had the assurance to protest to Frederic William against the calumny of which he was the victim: "This excellent King," he writes, "consoled me in the most affecting fashion." In any case, he gave him an excellent piece of advice—to abandon diplomacy for the moment, and to return to Neuchâtel, "there to await his decision."* Fauche then took his departure, swearing that his disgrace would reflect all the sovereigns of Europe; and certainly these monarchs had no need of further cause for preoccupation; it was then the beginning of June, 1815; the name, fated for a few days longer to remain unheard, of a sorry little Belgian market-town, known only to the people of the countryside, and of the people who plied between Charleroi and Brussels—Waterloo—was about to resound throughout the world, and remain forever famous, because it was the scene of the last act of the great tragedy, in which this wretched man, returning home weary, ruined, and broken, considered himself to have played a part. Now, full of bitterness and regret, he was making his way back to his little publisher's office, which he never should have left.

He was indeed defeated—by his presumption, his credulity, his clumsiness, his indiscretion, his insatiable love of intrigue and of gain. Any other man would have thrown up the sponge: but not so he. He had not been at home a fortnight when he broke bounds, and again sallied forth, incorrigible, in search of adventure. This time he revealed himself as a strategist, conquered the fort of Joux single-handed, and took possession in the King's name. We shall not attempt to follow him through all the details of this escapade, his narrative eluding all verification, owing to the tone of exultation and even irrelevance with which it is imbued. In Paris, whither Fauche soon returned, he was no more moderate; he had got it into his head that he must

* Fauche ends his recital of these incidents by reproducing a long appeal addressed by him to Louis XVIII.; in this he warmly defends himself from the accusation that he ever served Bonaparte. Not a word about the letter which he was accused of opening and falsifying. Does it not seem that his silence was all but a confession?

"bring his enemies down." "Enemy" was a generic term, including not only the infamous Perlet, but also Blacas, who expelled him from Ghent; the Duc Decazes, who closed the doors of the Tuileries against him; the Marquis de Maisonfort, who, in 1798, in Hamburg, had forestalled him in the matter of the Barras "affair," and was now a general of brigade, Councillor of State, and Solicitor-General to the King's Household.

He ran to and fro, calling upon heaven and earth, laying siege, in turn, to Talleyrand, the Duc de Richelieu, the Duc d'Otrante, Lord Granville, Barras, Hardenberg, all the Ministers, and all men in high places; he obtained polite but meaningless assurances, such as may always be obtained from men fearful of compromising themselves and of alienating a man reputed to be dangerous. Fauche did not realise that in thus spreading the calumnies under which he was stifling he was propagating them. There are accusations which a man cannot refute; the dread and disgust to which they give rise being so great that no one is willing to investigate them; and among them are treason and espionage. Unless he has a taste for the heroic, a man will prefer blindly to admit the guilt of a possibly innocent man, rather than risk disaster by his side, by undertaking his defence if he be guilty. Thus the unfortunate Fauche, politely received and abundantly commiserated by those whom he importuned with his everlasting grievances, accepted as evidence of esteem and support what was in actual fact merely a prudent way of getting rid of him. It need hardly be said that he did not advance his cause by such means, and by a supreme blunder he thought, such was his mental confusion, that he would obtain better results by appealing to the public. He printed* an account of his misfortunes,† in which he related his whole history, from his first venture in "politics" to the discovery of Perlet's guilt, publishing his own blunders to

* In October, 1815.

† *Précis historique des différentes Missions dans lesquelles M. Fauche-Borel a été employé pour la Cause de la Monarchie, suivi de Pièces justificatives* (Paris; printed at the author's cost, 840).

the tune of 3,000 examples, and naming persons who would greatly have preferred not to figure in this history. The King, to whom the author did not fail to send a copy as a mark of respectful homage, greatly displeased to find the seamy side of his diplomatic service while in exile divulged, ordered the book to be seized; but three hundred copies, which escaped confiscation, were enough to multiply the unknown quantity, *x*, representing Fauche's enemies, by quite a respectable coefficient. In order to outdo the scandal, Perlet, who had nothing to lose and no friends to alienate, replied to Fauche's *Précis* by an *Exposé**—a refutation which delighted the idle scandal-mongers, this duel between the two spies providing an infinity of interesting revelations. Fauche, stung to the quick, confided his return stroke, which he wished to make a crushing blow, to a witty advocate, Lombard de Langres, formerly protected by Barras, and an ex-member of the Court of Cassation, known as the author of several publications and comedies, some serious and some otherwise. Lombard produced a biting *Mémoire*,† quivering with wrath, written with spirited energy, and exhibiting a great power of logical argument. Fauche emerged from battle victorious; but the public, delighted with this passionate duel, was convinced that the fight was not over; one of the combatants must be left on the field. The quarrel interested many persons because it bordered on politics; the supporters of Bonaparte were ill-pleased that the name of their hero should be involved in this low intrigue, though they were delighted with the trick that his police had played on Louis XVIII.; the Royalists were indignant with the inadmissible means employed by the Usurper to dupe the King, though they rejoiced that light

* *Exposé de la Conduite de Perlet, ci-devant Imprimeur-libraire et Journaliste, relativement à l'auguste Famille des Bourbons, depuis* 1789 *jusqu'au ce Jour, et Réfutation des Calomnies de Fauche-Borel,* in octavo, 1816.

† *Mémoire pour Louis Fauche-Borel contre Perlet, ancient Journaliste,* Paris, Michaud (printer to the King), April, 1816, quarto. Lombard published the text of this compilation at the end of his own *Mémoires,* 1823.

should be shed on the traps set by Fouché and Dubois; the more sensitive were attracted by the touching figure of young Vitel, the innocent victim of a hideous conspiracy; and even the indifferent followed with amusement the chapters of this romantic serial, which initiated them into the mysteries of the secret police, an object of constant attraction to the insatiable curiosity of the Parisian public.

Consequently the excitement was intense when Fauche-Borel announced his intention of bringing his slanderers to justice. The case had to be fought out before the Correctional Tribunal of the Seine, and at a preliminary hearing* the magistrates decided to call Veyrat as witness: Veyrat, whose appearance in Court promised the lovers of the sensational a memorable entertainment.

* May 10, 1816.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DAY OF ACCOUNTING

THE case commenced on May 17, 1816, at one o'clock in the afternoon, before the Chamber of Correctional Police. Curious spectators crowded round the doors in such numbers that the Court decided, for the occasion, to desert its usual place of assembly and to sit in the much larger and much more convenient hall of the Provost's Court.* All eyes were fixed upon the "celebrated" Fauche-Borel, whose almost jovial assurance, together with his air of absolute serenity, his good-humoured, clean-shaven face, with its bright, prominent eyes, inspired a feeling of sympathy. He took a seat beside Maître Berryer, his advocate, one of the most esteemed orators of the Parisian bar. Perlet presented a contrast to Fauche: sitting on a stool in the prætorium, he was discussing matters with his counsel, Maître Maugeret, in a lively and emphatic fashion. An usher announced the Court; the President, Chrétien de Poli, and his assessors, Dufour and Geoffroy, took their places; the substitute, Riffé, occupied the seat of the King's Procurator. Fauche-Borel's indictment of Perlet for calumny and fraud, and Perlet's recriminatory indictment of Fauche for calumny had been read at the preliminary hearing on May 10, so that the advocates confined themselves, on the present occasion, to the statement of their conclusions: Fauche-Borel demanded the suppression of Perlet's *Exposé*, 300 francs damages to be distributed to the poor, and the restitution of the £600 sterling which Perlet had demanded in order to save Charles Vitel from execution, as well as the money deposited by Vitel in

* *Le Moniteur*, May 18.

Hottinger's bank, which Perlet had annexed. Perlet, for his part, demanded the suppression of the two *Mémoires* published by Fauche, and 10,000 francs, which he devised "to the relief of the unfortunate."

The President questioned Perlet as to his interviews with Vitel in March, 1807, and the reasons for his detention at Sainte-Pelagie, coinciding precisely with the young officer's arrival in Paris. Perlet replied coolly enough, endeavouring to show that while he had been detained in prison it was not for some imaginary offence, but at the request of a creditor: he was at the time penniless, without the means of supporting his wife and children. It was objected that he had received considerable sums of money from his superiors, and, in particular, from Inspector-General Veyrat, and he was confronted with the receipts signed by his own hand; he replied that Veyrat used to draw large sums of money from the treasury of the Police Department; but that he kept them for himself, and in order to justify the employment of these sums he compelled his subordinates to sign receipts of accommodation; they never received anything more than the paltriest sums, and would have been ruined had they dared to protest against the rapacity of the police. "But," said the President, "if the receipts which you signed were merely signed to oblige the Inspector-General, would you have worded them thus: *I have no words in which to express my gratitude.*"

"Yes," said Perlet, "Veyrat insisted on receipts so worded."

He defended every inch of ground, but with each reply he was forced backwards; some of his replies had already been received by murmurs in the Court, the sly, smirking expression of the informer, and his obstinate fashion in which he stuck to the most obstinate lies producing a most unfavourable impression on the spectators. For the rest, this revelation of administrative dishonesty, this peep up the backstairs of the Rue de Jerusalem, held the attentive audience like the performance of one of those plays that work up to their crisis through a thousand interesting

incidents. It was felt that one of the two men confronting one another would leave the Court amidst a storm of curses and howls of execration, forever dishonoured, and the spectators shuddered at the depth, divined rather than perceived, of the gulfs of rascality and untruth uncovered from moment to moment by the interpolations of the President and the replies of the two opponents.

The substitute of the King's Attorney now addressed the Court. He insisted on the fact that Perlet entered Sainte-Pelagie on March 21, 1807, the day before Vitel's arrival in Paris. Then, addressing Perlet, he said: "If you were really imprisoned for debt, if you were, as you profess, and still profess, the faithful agent of the King; if there existed, as you assure us there did exist, a powerful Royalist Committee, you would surely have found, thanks to the influence of your fellow-members, the means of escaping from prison, or of avoiding imprisonment." Perlet insisted in his imposture: "It is quite true that I had relations with persons of the highest degree; but I never asked anything of them, for fear of compromising them." The President turned to Fauche-Borel: "Have you the proof that the Royal Committee did not exist?"—"I have the proof," replied Fauche, with indignant irony; "I have the proof that it consisted of Bonaparte, Fouché, Dubois, and their followers! . . ." But Perlet persisted, as he had already done in his *Exposé;* he protested that from the beginning of the Revolution he had been noted as unshakably loyal to the King. "It is for the King that I have ruined myself, meeting the enormous expenses necessitated by the Committee, and forever pouring money down the throat of the greedy and insatiable Veyrat." M. Berryer interrupted: "I will ask M. Perlet, now that to have served the Royal cause is an honourable distinction, to inform us who were the members of his Committee?" And Perlet, in the resolute tones of the upright man, from whom the threat of death will not wrest the secret of honour: "I told the King in London; I shall tell no one else. This is of the greatest importance." The President tried to explain how

greatly his cause would gain by complete sincerity. But on this point the informer was firm. "No! No! I will not add anything to what I have said."—"Produce the witness Veyrat," said the President. And Veyrat appeared: a man of medium height, with blue eyes and a bald forehead surrounded by a crown of yellow hair, already turning grey. His face was pitted with smallpox.* A wave of curiosity passed over those present at the appearance of this individual, who, for nearly fifteen years personified, for the Parisian, the executive police, so that his sinister features were associated with many tragic memories. He approached the bar; his bearing and behaviour were imbued with a sort of authority. He recited his names and qualities: Pierre Hugues Veyrat, fifty-eight years of age, ex-Inspector-General of the Police, born in Geneva. At first he appeared to be labouring under a powerful emotion: "Perlet and I," he said, "grew up together; we come from the same part of the same country. I find it very painful to have to tell the truth in a case of this nature. . . ." But he soon recovered the frigidity which was obviously habitual with him. The impression which he produced was that of a man accustomed to appear in the Courts where justice is dispensed; he said what was needful, and said it well, speaking in a tone that carried conviction with it. To begin with, he gave a brief account of his relations with Perlet. For many years interrupted, these relations were resumed about 1804; Perlet applied to him for something to do, and obtained employment as a secret agent; he was in a position to be of great service to the Government on account of his relations with London and, in particular, with Fauche-Borel.

The President then put to Veyrat the anticipated question: "Do you know anything about the Royal Committee?"—"It had no existence, it was a fabrication invented to make money by it." A murmur of indignation arose from the crowd. Perlet still sought to brave the storm; he was seen in the midst of the uproar gesticulating and raising his arms as though taking an oath; but Veyrat was merciless. "No

* *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6241, exhibit 26.

one knows the names of the members of this Committee," he cried.—"The King knows them," shouted Perlet. His sometime accomplice, he whom he had praised in so humiliating a fashion, to whom he swore passive obedience and blind devotion, tore the mask from his features, and a dramatic scene followed; so affecting that even the hard-bitten Veyrat himself appeared to be moved by it; though he had seen, without faltering, many an accused prisoner stumble into the snare set by his henchmen. How many shrieks of anguish, how many despairing appeals had left him unmoved! But here it seems as though his austerity had deserted him; it was with a sigh of regret, almost of contrition, that he executed his last victim: "I am grieved," he said, "to be forced thus to accuse Perlet; but I am compelled to speak the truth, and I find it a heart-breaking business. . . ."* But he continued merciless, reviewing and revealing the secrets of the correspondence exchanged between Perlet and Fauche-Borel: "Three-quarters of the letters received by Perlet were forwarded by him, unopened," to his superiors. "As for the replies, they were written in collaboration with the Government." Berryer continued to question the witness, who apparently intended to conceal nothing: "Do you know anything of the orders given by Bonaparte to Perlet in respect of the journeys to London?" —"I know all about them; he was sent by the Minister, who gave him 5,000 to 6,000 francs for the journey. He was not satisfied, on account of the risks they incurred. On returning to Paris he shut himself up; he refused to see anyone, even his wife."

And Vitel? Veyrat, unhesitatingly, rehearsed the tragedy in which he himself had played a part. Was he likely to forget it? "Perlet professes that he wished to save the young ensign. I have irretrievable proof of the contrary:

* All the newspapers of the time published lengthy reports of the proceedings in the Perlet case; in these pages it is chiefly the report of *Le Moniteur* which has been employed, though it has been completed, in respect of certain details, by passages occurring in other newspapers. The phrases quoted in inverted commas are, of course, reproduced verbatim.

and it resides in the fact that his clerk, Gallais, whom he sent to fetch Vitel, was an agent of the Prefecture." The statement was indeed conclusive: if Perlet had not premeditated the sacrifice of Fauche-Borel's nephew he would hardly have sent a policeman to escort him from the moment he entered Paris. As Perlet no longer protested, the President demanded: "Is it true that Gallais was a police-agent?"—"As a matter of fact, he was an Inspector," replied the informer piteously, and again a murmur ran through the crowded court, shocked by these tragic revelations, while Veyrat continued his overwhelming evidence: "The £600 sterling which Perlet had enjoined Fauche to send him, 'in order to save Vitel,' could not, as a matter of fact, in any way affect the unfortunate man's safety; and Perlet was perfectly aware of this. No one could have saved Vitel once he had been denounced. For me, I was not so foolish as to compromise myself in this connection. . . ." Perlet, then, was a thief and a murderer. Nothing could stop Veyrat; not even the evidence that his sometime associate was lost; he continued his narrative, though no further questions were put to him: "Do you wish me to explain the matter of the walking-stick? When Vitel was arrested, the walking-stick had not been seized, but Perlet warned us that it contained important documents. I then gave orders that it was to be brought to me from Vitel's apartments, and this was done. That evening Vitel was sent for; when he was shown the walking-stick, he exclaimed: '*I am lost! I had confided that to no one except Perlet.*' The examining-magistrate sawed the walking-stick through. It was a small bamboo, no thicker than one's finger. Everybody expected to find in it something extraordinary, but to their astonishment the letter merely contained a request for two passports. Vitel said: 'I was to give it to the Minister in case he proved to be on our side.'"

It was to Fauche that the execrations of the public should have been addressed when these words were spoken: Fauche, guilty, with inexcusable frivolity, on the strength of a mere supposition, occurring to a mind so fruitful in its fantastic

imaginings, of having entrusted to his nephew a communication so perilous that its discovery was equivalent to a death-warrant. But for those present in that court it was the abject Perlet who bore the accumulated blame for what had happened. Berryer, Fauche's counsel, very skilfully profited by this impression, putting to Veyrat the decisive question: "The whole of Fauche-Borel's correspondence has passed before your eyes. I beg you to observe whether in this correspondence you have ever noticed anything that would enable you to conclude that he had ever in any way deviated from the sacred path of duty?" Veyrat replied, with a certain solemnity: "I swear that I can say nothing save in praise of his constant zeal for and devotion to the Royal cause." And while Berryer resumed his seat—with that expression of final conviction and modest triumph which mark the advocate henceforth certain of the success of his cause—the applause broke out amongst the spectators, as in the theatre, at the end of an act which enables one to foresee the anticipated issue.

Veyrat left the court, and the ushers introduced, as witness, Danican, who took Veyrat's place at the bar. Danican was a ghost, a phantom; it was as though he had arisen from the depths of time. His name, which at one time, for a day, was famous throughout Paris—that day when the population rose in revolt against the Convention—had now been completely forgotten for fully twenty-five years. There were, of course, among the spectators, a few elderly Parisians, who in Vendémiaire had marched under the orders of this puppet, and to whom these things appeared so remote that they would not have been astonished had a centenarian answered and stepped up to the bar. He gave his age: fifty-two years. His rank, that of officer. "Are you not a General?" demanded the President.—"I do not know what I am, but I was a General twenty-three years ago! . . ." He had come to give evidence in Perlet's defence, still feeling, where Fauche-Borel was concerned, the old jealousy and hatred that dated from his visit to England: "It is a mistake," he said, "to accuse Perlet of

Vitel's death. It was the letter intended for Fouché that slew the young man. And what if it was Perlet who delivered the letter ?" For a moment the General remained dumbfounded: "In that case," he replied, "I can only say that I am not responsible for the perversity of mankind."

Perlet was still struggling to emerge from the mire into which he had sunk; but the universal disgust with which he was regarded began to weigh upon him so heavily that he sought in vain to recover his footing. As a rule, the crowd—and the Parisian crowd, above all—cannot witness unmoved the desperate struggles of a human being, even of a criminal of the deepest dye, struggling against the rising stream, and seeking to postpone the moment when he will sink, never to rise again; but here they contemplated with fierce satisfaction the submergence of this wretched creature, gasping for breath, stammering, distracted, already feeling the current that would drag him down in the abyss. There were no more witnesses to hear; the case was adjourned for a week, when counsel would make their final speeches. According to public opinion, Fauche-Borel's case was already won. The newspapers, in their reports of the first day of the trial, were agreed in depicting Perlet as a miracle of treachery and untruth. The journalists ran short of adjectives with which to describe "the sinister figure of the traitor," in comparison with whom the worst scoundrels of legend were but pale and colourless figures. When, on Friday, May 18, the curious spectators, more numerous even than on the first day of the trial, were crowding together in the corridors, all eagerly gazed about them, hoping to catch sight of this monster of rascality; but Perlet was not there, nor was his advocate; the Court assembled, and still they had not put in their appearance. Berryer addressed the Court.

Of his address, which occupied three hours, we shall mention here only a few passages which complete our knowledge of this long-drawn-out police intrigue. The advocate showed that Perlet, in the period covered by his correspondence with Fauche, received from the latter some

50,000 francs. If we add to this sum the more modest amounts which the informer received from the funds of the Department, either as salary or as gratuities, the 6,000 francs which, according to Veyrat, represented the cost of his journey to London, and the money obtained from the unfortunate Vitel, we shall see that his infamy brought him in about 100,000 francs. Berryer then touched upon Perlet's slanderous accusation, to the effect that Fauche-Borel had served in Bonaparte's police, and in 1813 had offered his services to Desmarest. What could possibly have induced Fauche to betray the cause to whose success he had so long devoted all his energies, and this just at the moment when it could easily be foreseen that the aforesaid cause was on the point of triumphing? If Fauche had enlisted in the Imperial Police, why did he not hand over to Desmarest the letters received from Perlet while he believed the latter to be one of the most steadfast champions of the Royalist cause? Moreover, what reliance could Desmarest have reposed in Fauche's offers if he had already deceived him, and if he had had in his possession the whole correspondence betraying the most ardent zeal for the Bourbon cause? Unanswerable arguments! which Berryer summed up in an elegant peroration: "Consult these registers, which contain the names of all those persons who were in the pay of the police: Fauche released the Ministers from all obligations toward himself which concealed the secrecy of their operations. . . . Yes; Fauche-Borel solemnly declared that he relieved the holders of these *dossiers* of all impediments which they might over-scrupulously admit, releasing them beforehand from the discretion which they considered that they owed him as their confidential agent. . . ." Fauche most certainly had a bad memory, and if his advocate's statements had been literal, he must have felt extremely foolish: for there was actually in the Archives of the Ministry of Police a certain *dossier* marked with his name, which had only to be examined—as we may examine it to-day—to bring to the light a letter dated June 15, 1804, in which, being in the prison of La Force, he professed his

attachment to the Emperor's Government, and "placed himself absolutely in the hands" of Desmarest; and it was Desmarest himself who wrote in the margin of this appeal: "*wishes to be treated as a spy.*" It is not possible that in this month of May, in the year 1816, when the newspapers were publishing whole columns of the report of the Fauche-Borel case, there was no inquisitive clerk to examine this *dossier*, in order to obtain some information respecting the person whose claims were invading the newspapers. If, in reply to Berryer's apostrophes, someone had laid this documentary revelation on the President's desk, what a sensation would have resulted from making it public! And perhaps the most astonished person in the court would have been the forgetful bookseller! But no; no such indiscretion was committed; which is a reassuring fact for those whose names are enshrined in the pigeon-holes of the secret police. The silence of the police has always been to their credit; for how many nobodies, pensioned by the secret service department of the Prefecture, could have compiled sensational notes dealing with Parisian society—could have published books assured of a considerable sale, merely by collecting their reminiscences? No one has ever done such a thing; the memoirs of ex-policemen are numerous, but many are apocryphal, and it is very unusual to find any scandalous revelations in the others. In all those whom duty compels to look closely into human wickedness there seems to be a reserve, a feeling of shame and compassion, akin to the silence of the confessor.

When Berryer had said his say, the President asked: "Is Perlet present?" No one replied, and the usher called in a loud voice for "the plaintiff Perlet." The Court waited; there was a murmur of astonishment; Perlet had not dared to face this second hearing. Even his counsel had not put in an appearance; both had thrown up the sponge, and confessed themselves beaten. The case was adjourned for a week, when the King's Deputy-Attorney would address the Court.

Fauche-Borel was avenged; the proceedings in court

had fully established the complete continuity of his Royalist zeal; in order to prove his good faith, one of his most active adversaries had not hesitated to accuse an old friend and playmate with a loathsome crime; but his counsel had swept away the last wisps of cloud that might have stained the pure heavens of his good intentions; the public had more than once broken out into expressions of approval, almost of enthusiasm; and his enemy had proclaimed his own defeat by leaving the court before the end of the trial. No one could doubt that the last hearing would confirm his triumph, and that the final remarks of the public prosecutor would complete his apotheosis. On the appointed day the Deputy-Attorney Riffé rose from his seat and began in the following terms: "An extravagant coupling of names which never should have come into contact must, in this trial, have aroused your indignation. All that is noblest, all that is most majestic, is here confronted with all that is vilest and most wretched. The name of the King has been mentioned in the same breath as that of Perlet. Who dared to do this thing? It was Sieur Fauche-Borel, and in fulfilling the duties of our ministerial office we feel compelled publicly to reproach him. . . ." So far there was nothing abnormal about the proceedings; though the hearers might have complained that the Deputy-Attorney had chosen a somewhat clumsy way of entering upon his subject; but he continued: "However great Fauche-Borel's desire to clear himself may have been, one thought should have checked him in the choice and employment of such means as these: the reluctance to pronounce, out of its proper place, a name that is sacred, should have sealed his lips. Could not he who boasts—and certainly, *if he speaks the truth*, he has much to boast of—could not he who boasts of having made so many sacrifices to the cause of the King, could he not have paid this cause the further homage of his sufferings, of the displeasure which these calumnies had evoked against him in His Majesty's heart? How could he bring himself to confide the knowledge of his sufferings not only to the capital of the republic, but to all France? Should he not

rather have concealed them in the secret places of his heart ? Could the Sieur Fauche-Borel have imagined that the decision of the Court, even supposing that it were favourable, could ever recover for him the indulgent kindliness which he had destroyed ? Can the decision of the Court be in any way binding upon him from whom they received the right to make such decisions ? Do Kings await a decision of the Court before they forget the wrongs that we have done them ? And when you have pronounced sentence, will the Sovereign be compelled to believe that Fauche-Borel was justified ? No, no, gentlemen, it does not happen thus; the powers of the earth account to God alone for their secret thoughts; they are set too high above us for us to read their hearts unless they open them to us; and the decision which the Sieur Fauche-Borel is demanding will not in any way affect the benevolence and esteem which he has the right to expect on the part of our august Sovereign. . . ."

The poor bookseller, who had been expecting all sorts of felicitations, listened in consternation, unable to believe his ears. He had had no warning of this: even though absolutely purged of Perlet's unspeakable calumnies, he could not hope for an end of his troubles; for it was plainly the King who was speaking through the lips of his Attorney: no member of the bar, indeed, would have committed himself to such categorical declarations had he not been expressly requested to do so by "some inspiration from on high," emanating, very probably, from the Chancellory. And the address continued, taking on the tone of a severe indictment: of Perlet ?—No, of Fauche-Borel, who was now being directly addressed: "You wished to justify yourself; but in order to do so you have committed the most deplorable indiscretion; you have divulged documents which ought to have remained secret. . . ." For the rest, had he not been rewarded far beyond his merits ? What mortal would not envy his lot ! "He has faithfully served the King; he has rejoiced in his majestic presence; and from his sacred lips there have fallen proofs of that kindliness which is the

predominant characteristic of our Sovereign; he has seen that Sovereign unbosom himself of the love-inspired plans for the happiness of his people devised by his Royal and unspotted heart. . . . Why did he not conceal in the secret places of his soul that happiness, that good-fortune, of which all Frenchmen should be jealous; for in divulging it he becomes less worthy of it?"

We have lingered here perhaps too complaisantly over this specimen of judicial eloquence; but apart from the fact that this astonishing example of rhetoric contains in the germ the tragic outcome of Fauche-Borel's adventures, it is also a curious example of the kind of verbiage evoked in the magistrate who, three years earlier, had spoken quite as warmly, we cannot doubt, in the name of His Majesty the Emperor,* by a ready-made idolatry in respect of a King so long disdained!

True, Perlet was guilty, but of what crime? Of having murdered Vitel in order to steal his purse? That had been a mere peccadillo. And had not Vitel likewise experienced the most ineffable bliss? Did he not die in the King's cause? "A death to be envied, a glorious death, a death to make illustrious the most obscure, the most unremarked of lives!" No; Perlet was a criminal, because he committed, "in respect of his Prince, the blackest and most cowardly perfidy."—"Perlet saw the King in his place of exile; and the Royal exile condescended to discuss his affairs with him. . . . We cannot tell, gentlemen, what impression such a moment may produce, but it seems to us that the confidences which a King deigns to condescend to make to his humble subject should bind the latter for life. It seems to us that a mission received from the lips of his Prince uplifts a man above himself; but nothing base, nothing dishonest, is any longer pardonable in him; that he must, so to speak, be constantly on guard against himself, lest he should become unworthy of such an honour, and that the idea of being the confidant of a King in misfortune would

* *L'Almanach Impérial*, 1813, p. 580. Courts of First Instance: Riffé, Imperial Deputy Procurator at Versailles.

bind him more closely to virtue. Such was not Perlet's opinion, nor was such the beneficial effect of the secret which he possessed; he abused it in the most abominable manner; he employed it to pander to his insatiable cupidity; he employed it to prolong our servitude." This, then, was Perlet's crime; and Riffé passed on to his peroration, which also is worthy of being quoted, dealing as severely with the slandered plaintiff as with the slanderer, but full of the warmest affection for the beloved Sovereign; it is a passage sparkling as with the fires of a pyrotechnical display.—"We have learned from this trial how a man may betray his King, or rather—and it is pleasanter, gentlemen, to consider the matter from this aspect—we have learned how a man should love him. It is only by conceiving a profound hatred, a visible contempt for all those greedy men who traffic in their plots and plans, and whose venal hearts and tortuous minds belong merely to the highest bidder; it is by defending the august name of King, by setting it apart from that of these obscure beings who, from the lowest ranks of society, approach the throne in a crawling posture, contrive to draw upon themselves a glance from the eyes of Sovereignty, and abuse it in order to unlock the paths leading to fortune; it is by branding on the forehead, with the brand of reprobation and infamy, those who pushed back the boundaries of depravity, becoming the base agents of crime and treason, employing both treason and crime against persons of Royal blood; we repeat, gentlemen, that such creatures were born of the mire and slime of Revolution, which is yet another reason why we should detest those general calamities and those who have brought them about. Woe to him who reserves the leaven of malice and wickedness! Woe to those who seek to give rise to opportunities of enabling such creatures as Perlet to betray such a King as Louis XVIII.! Let us love him with all our strength, and let us pity those who shall love him less than we!"

Sentence was passed the same day. It gave satisfaction to Fauche-Borel in respect of every point at issue, and he

himself was "discharged" as innocent of the offence of slander for which Perlet had indicted him. Perlet was sentenced to five years' imprisonment, a fine of 2,000 francs, revocation of civil rights for ten years, restitution of the sum which he stole from Fauche-Borel—that is, 14,108 francs plus interest—and 300 francs damages, and the costs of the trial: he was also forbidden to sell or circulate his *Exposé*, which was declared to be false, slanderous, and prejudicial to the honour of his adversary; finally, the tribunal ordered that "the present decision shall be printed to the number of 500 copies and posted in public places at the expense of the said Perlet."* And so Fauche-Borel triumphed over his slanderer, but not over the slander.† The whole matter was too obscure for the public to take the trouble to find its bearings in the affair; and the enormous publicity which it had thoughtlessly bestowed on Fauche-Borel unluckily coupled his name with Perlet's, so that before three months had passed, indifferent or inattentive spectators were bound to confuse the traitor with the man betrayed, no longer feeling quite sure which of the two was the bigger rogue.

The Liberal newspapers laughed their fill at these anything but edifying revelations in respect of the good fame of the diplomatists who surrounded Louis XVIII. *during the first eighteen years of his reign*, for it was thus that he spoke of his years of exile; the Royalist newspapers, on the other hand, stated that this "shameful" case showed in its most odious light the "Government of the Usurper who employed such means and such men." *L'ami de la Religion et du Roi* wrote: "If there were among the curious spectators of the trial a few misguided persons who regretted the Government of Bonaparte, they would have been cured by the revelation of so many crimes and so much baseness."‡ As for the winning of the King's favour, the only practical

* *Judgment rendu contre Perlet.* . . . Placard in two folio sheets. *Imprimerie Michaud Rue des Bons-Enfants.*

† Caudriller, *Pichegru*, xxvii.

‡ May 22, 1816-48.

revenge that Fauche desired, he would never be able to regain it, and the more he strove to do so the more he would alienate himself therefrom and jeopardise his chances of obtaining it. Louis XVIII., who had nobly endured poverty, desertion, and even the humiliation of being forgotten, refused to be made ridiculous, and the publication of an audience granted to a police-informer made him seem like a King in a melodrama: and this he could not and would not forgive. When, in the world of politics, a man has achieved an aim long pursued, he does not care to remember the byways and the mud of the roads which he had to follow to attain it: and to remind him of them in a conspicuous fashion is the surest means of arousing his displeasure.

But Fauche did not see the matter thus. When he reluctantly entered on what he insisted on calling "diplomacy," an "august mouth"—that of the Prince de Condé—had promised him, in the event of the King's restoration, a million in ready-money, a high office, and the *cordon* of St. Michel; now the Restoration was an accomplished fact, and he wanted his *cordon*, his office, and his million. He was willing, however, to be reasonable, and to count as nothing "the thirty years"* of his life devoted to the Bourbon cause, the "thousand dangers" to which he had exposed himself, "his sacrifices of every kind," and his "constant devotion"; but at least let him be restored to the situation from which he was taken; and he draws up the credit and debit account of this situation, which was truly magnificent: "I enjoyed a position of great affluence; I was at the head of two large establishments; I had at my command a capital of nearly 500,000 francs, and I had no debts. . . ." And he publishes this statement to the world, shouting at the top of his voice; and he even came to believe it, for his megalomania increased in proportion to his disgrace; and the unhappy man condemned himself to the exhausting life of the suitor who besieges offices, solicits protectors, provides himself with testimonials and sworn statements; the life of a man who spends hours in waiting-rooms, who is

* *Mémoires*, iv., 558.

shown to the door, only to fill his victims' ears with his groans and importunities and petitions, and who knows neither rest nor shame. Everywhere deaf ears were turned to him; but sometimes he encountered the type of man who makes ready promises: "It is a shame, M. Fauche, that you have nothing there," placing his finger on one of Fauche's buttonholes, and already he saw himself wearing the ribbon of the Legion of Honour: "I am determined to put your business through; it is an abominable case . . .," said another; and poor Fauche looked to obtain his million and his influential post from one day to the next. Yet nothing came his way; months and years went by; and he was not the only one to wait. In the West yonder were veteran Chouans mutilated in the Great War; their sons had fallen musket in hand; their lands were ravaged, and their houses in ruins. When they heard that the King had come into his own, they thought to themselves: now our day has come. No one gave them a thought. The widows of peasants who died for the White Flag obtained a present of 30 francs yearly; the five children of the great Cathelineau had not enough bread to support them in the thatched cottage from which their father went forth to call the Vendée to arms. And the widows of Lescure and La Rochejaquelein were under police supervision* in the year 1816! . . . By way of compensation a sister of Robespierre was receiving a pension of 2,000 francs! Those who could be rewarded by a portfolio, the title of Duke or some other mark of distinction, were easily satisfied: and such was the fate of Blacas, la Maisonfort, La Châtre, Dandré, the Abbé de Montesquiou—to confine ourselves to names mentioned in the course of this narrative; Carlos Sourdat was a Colonel, attached to the staff of the Governor of Paris.† But the "small" men—what could be done for them? The whole budget of France would not have sufficed to grant a pension, even the smallest, to all those who considered that they had

* Crétineau-Joly, *Histoire de la Vendée militaire*, Drochon's edition, iv.; *L'Ingratitude, passim.*

† *Archives (administratives) of the Ministry of War.*

a right to the gratitude of the restored King. The Abbé Ratel, who was not well received in Paris, returned to live in England, where he was all but naturalised; Leclerc of the wall-eye, the agent for the "English correspondence," returned to France and obtained a small annual grant, on which he lived until 1839; but he was a man who was contented with small things. The valiant Ange Pitou, who, in the days of the Brotier agency, gave all that he had, and even ran into debt in the King's service, and was finally deported to Cayenne, now presented his account: and the Royal treasury recognised that the sum of 545,750 francs was due to the street-singer; but he was put off from year to year, and he died in 1846 without having received a single franc. This creditor of the Bourbons was to be seen begging in the streets at the age of seventy-two. And it was the State that finally inherited the half-million which the poor devil of a ballad-singer advanced in Fructidor.*

Fauche-Borel was little disposed to such resignation as this, and was, moreover, head-over-heels in debt, having left in Berlin, Hamburg, Switzerland, and England, creditors who were now showing their claws. The reader has perhaps forgotten that he himself claimed to be a creditor of the King of France, having, in 1801, redeemed a note for 174,600 francs, subscribed in 1792 by the Prince, then in very low water. And here Fauche had made by no means a bad investment; at the present time he valued this document at 365,700 francs, the accumulated interest having, in twenty-eight years, doubled its value. We need not follow the endless procedures by which he at last obtained repayment of this debt; but the Royal Exchequer retained some part of the interest, and instead of paying Fauche in hard cash, it gave him stock to that amount. At this he resumed his demand for money, protesting that he was being cheated out of 170,000 francs; at the same time, as though content with nothing less than the hostility of the whole world, he took the public into his confidence in respect of his expenditure and the justice of his claims. To begin

* F. Engerrand, *Ange Pitou.*

with, he attacked the Deputy-Procurator who had given him such a trouncing on pleading his case in the court, and printed a *Réponse de Fauche-Borel à Monsieur Riffé* with a portrait of Charles Vitel as frontispiece—Vitel, whose case he exploited as skilfully as though it had been he himself who was condemned to death. He published also a *Plaidoyer de Fauche-Borel contre M. Henri Larivière*, who refused to return to him the money lent during a period of emigration, and since there were still some kinds of imbecility of which he had not yet been guilty, and amongst them the writing of memoirs, he did not fail to express himself in this fashion, resolving to call all Europe, the whole world indeed, and posterity, to witness the ingratitude of those in high places.

Meanwhile he continued to travel; we hear of him in London, and then in Berlin, where he busied himself with un undertaking for the supply of hygienic cesspits, which, however, he quickly dropped. He returned to Paris, where he had left an agent acting under powers of attorney, with instructions to give the Government no peace, with the result that in August, 1820, he was at last granted an indemnity of 50,000 francs, and a pension of 3,000, charged upon the civil list, a grant which he considered as a small provisional advance, although he had been very plainly informed that the decision was "final." However, he could not abandon the game; he was nearly sixty years of age; how could he ever fill up his time, now that he had acquired the taste for negotiations and interventions, in which he believed himself to excel? It had become a necessity with him to interview people, to gossip eternally, to discuss international politics, to give his advice, his opinion; and if we are to believe certain of his contemporaries, few men contrived to cause so much annoyance as this elderly subordinate police-agent; this "fly on the coach-wheel of the emigration," a great talker, one addicted to empty and pretentious phrases who at any moment was ready to narrate his whole life's history. He was suffered, out of politeness; people tried to attend to his narratives; but he was accus-

tomed to receive but a frigid welcome. Chateaubriand, less patient than others, or having something better to do, sent him packing without more ado, from his Ministerial study, where Fauche, little anticipating such treatment, had planted himself during business hours. And as he was not so foolish that he did not realise that he was being dismissed, he concluded that this fresh disgrace was due to the underground work of his "enemies."

For he had not ceased to struggle—and with what lamentable prolixity!—against the accusation made by Perlet; a slanderous accusation, which, despite the sentence passed upon the police spy, was regarded as the truth by the gossips of Paris, always inclined to malice. Fauche, in order, finally, to unbosom himself, appealed to M. Decazes, the only Minister who, by his position in the King's Household, was influential enough to throw light on the mystery of this ever-occurring legend. Decazes received Fauche with caution; he listened to his complaint, and addressed him thus: "I must request you, M. Fauche, to explain yourself in respect of a note which is attributed to you in a police Directory." And he sent one of his secretaries for a couple of volumes, bound in parchment, in one of which Fauche-Borel perceived that his own name was entered, with a mention of the circumstances under which, "since the beginning of the Revolution," he had taken part in movements favourable to the Bourbons. And here we are compelled to follow his own narrative, as there are no documents with which we can compare it. What were these two directories? What has become of them? Were they returned to the Archives of the Prefecture, and in this case were they destroyed in the fire of 1871, which almost entirely consumed that abundant museum of documents? These are questions to which we cannot reply. But in one of these volumes Fauche read, entered under his name, a comment to the effect that in 1813 he had appealed to Desmarest, through the intervention of M. Gilles, for the favour of a passport, and in the margin was this further comment: *Note delivered by Fauche-Borel to Bonaparte's police.*

Fauche, who had a perfect genius for muddling things, explained that the interpretation put upon the facts was fraudulent; in it he recognised the hand of one of his enemies, who had already been guilty of the "Ghent postscript," destined to ruin him in the eyes of the King of Prussia. The truth was much simpler than this; it is quite true that in 1813, quivering with desire to enter into personal relations with Perlet's Committee, he had appealed directly to Desmarest for permission to spend a day in Paris, proposing, in return for this favour, an exchange of reciprocal communications: a farcical idea, emanating, as it did, from such an unreliable liar as himself, and addressed, as it was, to the powerful personage who was then the head of the secret police. It was this piece of stupidity for which the imprudent Fauche had been paying ever since the Bourbons returned. It was this simple line, written to order by some clerk, that had earned him the hostility of Blacas, the disaffection of the King, and the ill-concealed hostility of all those whom he was seeking to importune. He drafted a report on the question which, we may imagine, nobody read, or if he did it would have convinced nobody. And by a supreme aberration he was not content with revealing to the first comer the cause of his downfall, for he put forward the explanation that he had offered information to the Imperial Police merely to obtain information of greater importance: the excuse of all traitors, which excuses nothing. When a man reaches this stage he is lost; his confession lives after him, but his justification is forgotten, and thus, by dint of discussing his affairs, Fauche lost all credit, not only at Court and in Paris, but also in Neuchâtel, whose worthy inhabitants were amazed by the luxurious way of living displayed by their occasional fellow-townsman, of whose resources they were ignorant and whose ostentation rang false. He could no longer doubt the distrustful attitude of his fellow-townsmen when, having obtained from the King of Prussia the title of Councillor of Legation—a diplomatic distinction—and the position of Councillor-General to His Majesty in Switzerland, the federal Directoire opposed his

nomination, declaring that "it would never give its assent to the installation of Fauche-Borel in any political or official capacity whatsoever." An affront which, once again, he attributed to his invisible "enemies," whose number, in his imagination, was increasing from day to day.

However, he still showed himself abroad, unwilling to abdicate his position; he was seen at the dinners given by Barras—another despised relic of the troublous years—who, like Fauche, met the general disdain by an empty display, posing as "the last of the Republicans," and kept open house at his luxurious home at Chaillot. One night it happened that Fauche took his seat there beside a young dramatic author, then in the first flush of fame, Alexandre Dumas; an encounter to which the great novelist referred long afterwards in his captivating *Mémoires*.

When Louis XVIII. died, worn out by his attacks of gout, Fauche journeyed to Reims in 1825 to witness the anointing of Charles X. He assures us that he was invited there by the King himself; it is more probable that in his vanity, which increased, as his horizon became more restricted, he wished to show himself at this assembly "of all the great notables, the men of mark of all Europe." His megalomania was increasing; he now bestowed upon himself the title of *Chevalier*,* and signed himself Louis de Fauche-Borel. The change of sovereign seemed to him favourable to fresh claims; once more he received promises and fair-words, and passed onward with hopes renewed; he had not given up his dream of a million francs, a magnificent post, and a decoration, which had been promised him thirty years earlier by the Prince de Condé, should he win over Pichegru to the cause of the Bourbons. Now the unhappy man considered that he had "succeeded,"† and

* "If I made myself a chevalier to serve the cause of the King, it was because it is better to be a knight-errant (*chevalier errant*) than a knight-hawk, of which gentry we saw so many during the emigration" (*Mémoires pour Louis Fauche-Borel*, by Lombard de Langres).

† "If I had been actuated merely by sordid motives *I should not have succeeded*," he wrote towards the end of his life.

it was in order to establish this fact and adduce proof thereof that, having returned to Neuchâtel, he undertook the enormous task of relating the story of his life and his diplomatic mission.

Not far away, in Geneva, vegetated the man whose name will always be associated with that of Fauche-Borel—Perlet. After sentence was passed upon him, in order to avoid punishment, Perlet crossed the frontier and settled down in Geneva, his native city. Without money, he took refuge with his sister, a book-stitcher, who lived in the Place de la Magdeleine; he himself had to work at the sewing-press, and learned the trade of stitcher; "otherwise it would have been the poor-house," he wrote. The bitterness of failure consumed the ruined man, who before Fructidor had known his days of success and affluence; at first he prudently kept silence; but little by little the humiliation of his manual trade, the smallness of his wages, his loneliness and his wretched, poverty-stricken life filled his heart with a sort of madness. Like Fauche-Borel, his adversary in a ten years' duel, he dreamed of the millions which had slipped his grasp; while handling the folding-knife or sorting the sheets he deplored the fact that his obscure and perfidious genius could find no means of rebuilding his fortunes. Had he not already, on returning from deportation, been face to face with destitution He had known, then, some measure of success, and had made considerable sums of money by hoaxing a fool. Was there still no possibility of encountering yet another pigeon to be plucked ? Was there no one for whom he could set a trap ? What ruse could he employ, unthought of as yet, and reliable, which would enable him to make such sums as he had once succeeded in making ? Such was his mania, his constant obsession. As his mental resources offered him nothing new, he reverted to the procedure which had formerly served him well, and, after three years of meditation, profiting by the confusion into which the murder of the Duc de Berry had thrown the French Government, he wrote to M. Simon, Minister of the Intérieur in

the Richelieu* Cabinet, to the effect that a man " whom the King had loaded with favours " had lately called upon him, Perlet, and believing him to be exasperated by the injustice of which he was the victim, had entrusted to him important papers whose publication would cause His Majesty " extreme displeasure." The Minister immediately dispatched to Vienna one of his subordinates—the Chevalier Catelin—who saw Perlet, and obtained from him, for the sum of 3,000 francs, the documents said to be compromising to the King. What were these documents really ? Probably some libel of Perlet's own creation, or the residue of documents removed from the files during the time of his employment by the Ministry of Police. Perlet gives no further explanation; he states merely that they were destroyed.† He was able to assure himself that his method had lost nothing in value, that profit could still be derived from it. Accordingly, three years later, on July 1, 1823, he addressed himself to the Duc d'Havré, to whom Fauche-Borel had introduced him during the first few days of the Restoration: recalling his previous negotiations, which had spared the King the most serious embarrassment, he explained that this time the matter was far more important, for chance had placed him in the possession of a secret which he hesitated to reveal, so great would be the danger of the slightest indiscretion. The Duc d'Havré forwarded this communication to M. de Corbière, Minister of the Intérieur, who instructed the sub-Prefect of Gex to make enquiries in respect of Perlet and the importance of the revelations with which he was threatening the Government. The sub-Prefect of Gex, M. Pourcelot, anxious to display his zeal, or perhaps merely to amuse himself by undertaking an excursion to Geneva, called upon Perlet one fine morning, to find him at his work-bench.‡

* The Comte Siméon replaced M. Decazes at the Ministry of the Interior on February 21, 1820, and retained office until December 14, 1821.

† *Archives nationales*, F^{7} 6944.

‡ " He (Perlet) is hardly known in the town; he lives in the greatest isolation with one of his sisters who, like himself, is employed by various publishers, stitching books. . . . I found him with his sister, occupied at his daily work."

He questioned him adroitly, stating that the motive of his visit was the regret which it caused him to know that "a man noted for his devotion to the person of the King should be in embarrassed circumstances." His aim in speaking thus was to inspire confidence and provoke confidences. Perlet kept a watch upon himself, confining himself to deploring " his painful situation," and expressed his gratitude to the sub-Prefect for his encouraging visit; on which the later questioned Perlet in plain terms. The book-stitcher appeared to be " neither surprised nor annoyed "; he did indeed possess a secret of importance, but had need of a few hours " to draft a statement " as to what he could reveal; " and he promised that this should reach Gex by the courier of the following day."

The following day the sub-Prefect received a letter. Perlet had thought better of his proposal: " I repeat the statement which I had the honour, yesterday, of making to you in my room. . . . For more than seven years I have been suffering from the injustice of men and the harshest privations of life. . . . It is a very long time, and I am sixty-five years of age !" So he continued his jeremiad, flattered by having, since his exile in Geneva, rendered King Louis XVIII. a great service, by preventing the publication of matter which was calculated to disturb His Majesty's peace of mind; and he ended thus: " Some weeks ago, chance or the mistaken conception that obtains as to my real opinions, resulted in my discovering a scheme of much greater importance, which my peculiar situation does not enable me as yet to reveal. . . . If there were pressing danger, I would tell all I know . . . but prudence forbids." Although its language was so equivocal, the letter was no more than an ill-disguised request for a pension or other monetary assistance. It was in this sense that the sub-Prefect reported on it to the Minister, while he assured Perlet of his regret that he could not advise His Excellency in his favour: " If," he added, " I might be permitted to advise you in your own interest, I should counsel you to devote yourself entirely to the King's service . . . while

confiding to his Ministers all information which you think could usefully be imparted to them."* But Perlet took umbrage at this; he replied in the tone of the disinterested man whose sensitive feelings have been hurt: "I am sorry to see that you are very far from understanding me; or you would not suspect my sincerity. My devotion to the person of Louis XVIII. needs no encouragement; the King himself acknowledged this, when on June 22, 1808, in his residence at Gosfield, Sussex, he commanded the Comte d'Avaray to write to me that "*he would retain in his heart, engraven in indelible characters, until the day for requitals, the memory of the services which I had rendered him. These, added M. d'Avaray, are the King's own words: his memory is always faithful when it voices his feelings. . . .*"

To invoke as an honourable title the words which the King had addressed to him, believing him to be an heroic servitor, whereas the informer had made his way into Gosfield only in order to spy! . . . Here is a fact that gives the final touch to our conception of the man. Louis XVIII. was still reigning, and Perlet might believe that this letter would be put before His Majesty. Could he really suppose that those at Court had forgotten the scandal of the 1816 lawsuit? Had he himself forgotten it, or was his mind hopelessly deranged? One would think so, in reading these last few lines: "No one can call in question the fact that I alone, by an extraordinary display of courage, saved Mme. d'Angoulême from certain death when she was imprisoned in the Temple.* I was commander-in-chief of all the united forces of the sections of Paris against the National Convention; I was sentenced to death on the 13th Vendémiaire. . . .† All the reward I got was that I was sentenced by an iniquitous tribunal, and forced to flee from a country I had chosen as my own. . . . Your letter,

* An allusion to the article published in the *Journal de Perlet* in the autumn of 1795, already mentioned in Chapter II.

† Needless to say, Perlet never commanded the sections, and was never sentenced to death. He was counting on the ignorance of the actors in the drama of the Restoration in respect of the events of the Revolution—an ignorance of which there are many examples.

Monsieur, is the last straw. I am not asking for anything. No good purpose is to be served by your troubling to write to me, still less by your coming to see me. . . . My decision is irrevocable." If Perlet had lost his senses he still retained the audacity of his best days, and he could lie more audaciously than ever. Faithful to the stratagem of the bogus "Royal Committee," he hoped to allure the sub-Prefect by this haughty attitude, and compel him humbly to sue—even with a golden plea—for the revelation of the dreadful secret which he professed to know. But he was now a trifle heavy-handed; neither Dubois nor Desmarest was there to guide his pen, and he had to continue to stitch books, his attempt at blackmail having failed. Nevertheless, he tried once more, at a later date, to find a dupe;* four years later we find the Minister—it was still M. de Corbière—asking the Prefect of Police for information as to the Sieur Perlet: "I wish, above all," says His Excellency, "to form a settled opinion as regards the imputations made by the Sieur Perlet in connection with the affair of the Sieur Fauche-Borel's nephew." This is the last echo of the tragedy. Perlet died in the following year, in Geneva, on November 29, 1828, in his garret in the Place de la Magdeleine.†

Fauche-Borel heard of his death without any feeling of despair, although we cannot be certain that in the collapse of all his ambitions he may have sometimes regretted the days when he had Perlet to nourish his illusions. At the time of Perlet's death Fauche was completing his great task, his *Mémoires*, an immense work which he intended

* See *Supplique adressée à Charles X. par le Publiciste Perlet, qui ameuta les Sections le* 13 *vendémiaire, fut condemné à Mort et déporté. Genève,* 15 *novembre,* 1824: Biblioth. de la Ville de Paris. *Bulletin V. Catalogues des Manuscrits, entrés de* 1906 *à* 1910, p. 13.

† "In the year 1828, on Saturday November 29, at one o'clock in the afternoon, there died in Geneva, Place de la Magdeleine, number 137, Charles-Frédéric Perlet; had been a printer; aged seventy years; born and domiciled in Geneva; married, firstly, Marthe-Elizabeth Quiby, and was left a widower; married a second time, to Elizabeth Fiévée; son of the late Abraham Perlet and the late Charlotte Gignoux, his wife" (*Archives of the State of Geneva*).

to be definitive. As early as 1824 he was in harness, and as he wished it to be as perfect in form as it would be startling in substance, he called in a collaborator, whose duty it was to edit the four octavo volumes of which the work consisted. In order to avoid pirated editions and to satisfy the eagerness of readers of all nationalities, it was to appear on the same day in French and in English, in Paris and in London. This, at all events, was arranged in the agreement signed by Fauche and the Sieur Tercy, who undertook to put into good and correct prose the notes and data furnished by Fauche-Borel.*

François Tercy was the brother-in-law of Charles Nodier: both were from Franche-Comté, and could therefore almost call themselves compatriots of Fauche, as the principality of Neuchâtel has always been united by the closest ties to the adjoining French department. Moreover, Nodier had remained a faithful admirer of Pichegru, whom he had known almost from childhood, and for whom he had retained feelings of the warmest admiration and gratitude. It was therefore a friendly trio that set to work, and the better to achieve his great task Fauche decided to settle down at Besançon, and to take thither the mass of letters, reports, and memoranda of the state of international politics, accounts, and bills of accommodation and other materials of which his archives consisted. We are able to detect a few traces of his residence in the ancient capital of Franche-Comté. The incorrigible babbler, always in search of a hero, chose as his victim Charles Weiss, the city librarian, who wrote to his friend Nodier: "You have sent M. Fauche to see me . . . from the day of his arrival I have had to listen to the story of all his missions, related in the greatest detail. Since then he has regularly paid me five or six visits a day, in my own room, in the library, or anywhere where he may hope to find me. Tell me of some way of escaping him!" Nodier replied: "You ask me to tell you how to get rid of M. Fauche. The surest means will be to die, and I have often thought of

* Frédéric Barbey, "Les Mémoires de Fauche-Borel." *Revue historique*, C 1, 1909.

doing this. Find me another, and tell me the secret. . . ."* We may judge from this that the Neuchâtel bookseller had already lost something of his prestige in the eyes of the Nodier-Tercy clan: and Nodier, at this period, had many encounters with the victim of Perlet's imagination, and this is why, in his *Souvenirs de la Révolution*, he has been able to give us so amusing, and probably so truthful, a portrait of the man.

But this comradeship could not last; the famous Fauche must have been an insupportable collaborator; so many of his illusions had assumed the form of grudges and so many of his disappointments had, in his embittered mind, become grievances, that he could keep nothing to himself, and had to take the whole world into his confidences. He could not bear to leave anybody unpunished; great or humble, they all had to hear what he had to say to them; but Tercy was the perfect man of the world, a great favourite in Parisian society; with him it went against the grain to espouse Fauche's quarrels, and he may well have begun to realise that Fauche was proposing to publish, not his memoirs, but a pamphlet, which was at the same time a personal apologia; and he would doubtless have considered that the documents to be incorporated in the work had to an improper extent been tampered with; for Fauche wanted to publish only such documents as were wholly to his credit, and probably thought nothing of "arranging" to his taste those whose wording did not seem to him to be sufficiently complimentary. In short, Tercy became disgusted with an ungrateful task, and the agreement to collaborate was broken.† Fauche now

* Frédéric Barbey, *loc. cit.*, quoting from L. Pingaud, *Mémoires de l'Académie . . . de Besançon*, 1887, and *Correspondance de Ch. Nodier*, published by A. Estignard.

† In the papers left by Barras, who, in the last years of his life used to dictate to his familiar friends notes that might be incorporated in his *Mémoires*, we find the following passage, undated, but evidently subsequent to 1827: "To sum up, M. Fauche-Borel is a dangerous and contemptible creature, given to stupid intrigues which have never succeeded; consequently the estimable M. Tercy abandoned the task of editing his *Mémoires*" (Unpublished papers, the property of Monsieur Foulon de Vaulx).

applied to Beauchamp, a writer then in vogue, and well prepared for such work by his previous publications. Alphonse de Beauchamp, formerly a clerk in the Ministry of Police, was dismissed for indiscretion: he was accused of having drawn upon the *dossiers* in his charge for some part of the data contained in his work on La Vendée: he was well acquainted with the actors in those troublous periods, and his tact should have spared Fauche many affronts.* Nevertheless, the first two volumes of the work were offered for sale in the latter part of December, 1828;† the third and fourth volumes appeared at an interval‡ of some few weeks, and, as may be supposed, the book aroused a perfect hurricane. The first to complain of it was Montgaillard, who, the better perhaps to serve the Restoration, was professing to serve Liberal opinions.§ He was living wretchedly in the Rue Montmartre, vaguely supervised—and perhaps assisted—by the police.‖ Many other protests followed; some were acrid in tone, others were piteous;¶ Fauche-Borel, or rather Beauchamp, replied to all. Barras, then nearing his

* In the preface to his *Mémoires* Fauche does not conceal the part played by his collaborator: "Aware of my insufficiency," he writes (Preface, I. xiv.), "I felt the need of the assistance of a literary man familiar with historical labours . . . and I sought for a pen capable of putting into shape my reminiscences, and the numerous data contained in my portfolio. My first attempt was not successful . . . in the end I recommenced my labours on a different basis, the editor who undertook the work displaying a perfect understanding of the tone to be taken. He has co-ordinated these *Mémoires* under my eye, always consulting me, constantly questioning me, and even, I may say, in some sort, identifying himself with me. . . ."

† It was printed by Crapelet, Rue de Vaugirard, and published by Moutardier, Rue Gît-le-Cœur, and bears the date 1829; but as its publication elicited a letter from Montgaillard, which appeared in the *Gazette de France* of December 25, 1828, while Fauche's reply is dated December 27, from which we may conclude that the volumes were postdated.

‡ The fourth volume contains a preface in which Fauche-Borel replies to some of the reputations excited by the first two volumes.

§ *Archives nationales*, F^7 6901[B].

‖ He was to die in poverty at Chaillot in 1841.

¶ The list will be found in Frédéric Barbey's biography.

end,* received, "from the impudent Fauche himself,"† the first two volumes of the *Mémoires*, and gathered together his last energies for a last protest against the slanders of the "everlasting fraud," who had been persecuting him for so many years.‡ The more aristocratic of his victims—such as Blacas or La Maisonfort—disdainfully declined to discuss matters with Fauche; Veyrat, too, was silent; in short, the *Mémoires of Fauche-Borel*, when the first sensation produced by their scandalous elements had passed off, were anything but successful; a few years ago one often came across them in the boxes of the second-hand bookstalls; uncut copies, bearing, on the fly-leaf of the first volume, the comment, in Fauche's large, lax handwriting: *De la part de l'auteur;* and he must have given away more than he sold, for the work is terribly heavy and full of tedious dissertations. Does it offer any guarantee of its truth? Yes; it is more truthful than most readers realise, and it does not deserve the suspicion and contempt with which it is regarded. It is plainly the work of a boaster, infatuated with the part which he has played, and we find on almost every page examples of the boastfulness which was the author's besetting sin; but while the facts recorded may be re-shaped to the recorder's advantage—a venial offence found in the work of most eminent writers of memoirs—they are only by exception invented.

The price of the four volumes was 28 francs. Fauche, we may suppose, expected the whole edition to be sold in a few days, founding on his book renewed hopes of wealth.

* He died on January 29, 1829. Four years earlier instructions were given by the King's Procurator to the Justice of the Peace for the *Arrondissement*, that in the event of the ex-Director's death, seals were at once to be placed on his papers (*Archives du Greffe de la Paix du Justice, VIII° Arrondissement*).

† Barras, *Mémoires*, Appendix IV., 433.

‡ In the unpublished papers of Barras, in M. Foulon's possession, are a number of leaflets dictated by Barras during the last hours of his life to a person who was evidently ignorant of history and orthography alike—perhaps his valet—who writes *Pigault Librun* for *Topino Librun*, *Divide Monier* for *David Monnier*, etc. These last confidences relate largely to Fauche-Borel and the Letters Patent.

His disappointment was cruel, but it was the last. Of all the money that had passed through his hands none was left; he had only debts. His creditors, seeing him without protectors and abandoned by all, began to show their teeth; his wife had died in 1824; all his children, save the daughter whom he had "married off" in England, had likewise disappeared. In order to make money by his new house in the Faubourg de Vieil-Châtel, he turned it into an inn—the *Hôtel Fauche*—hoping, it may be, that his renown would assure it of custom; not a single traveller of note, not a single person of distinction visiting Switzerland, would fail to alight at the house of "the celebrated Fauche-Borel." But his personal presence would have been essential, and he spent but little time in Neuchâtel, being always on the road, restless, a prey to fits of excitement, which even his exhausting activity could not allay. He would set out without a motive and return unexpectedly; like a tight-rope walker who has dropped his balancing pole, yet still seeks to keep his footing. During the latter part of August, 1829, he reappeared in Neuchâtel, having returned from Paris, in a restless, distracted frame of mind; he did not conceal the fact that his affairs were going badly; his creditors were unmanageable; he was threatened with bankruptcy, perhaps with imprisonment. He spoke of dying, and at times his excitement gave way to a profound melancholy; one day he was found fingering a razor. The older inhabitants of Neuchâtel recalled the fact that his father exhibited symptoms of mental derangement, and for seven years had, with a morbid exaltation, persisted in litigation against the city.

On September 4, about four o'clock in the afternoon, Fauche-Borel climbed the stairs to the very top of his new hotel; thence one could enjoy a wide, magnificent horizon—the lake, the mountains, and the green countryside, and huddled on its hill the ancient city, with its medley of roofs, the sheaf of towers and turrets ascending from its old castle, the spire of the Collegiate Church, the network of narrow streets and lanes, overlooked by the pediment of the Hôtel de Ville; while behind it rose the Rue de l'Hôpital, with the

modest house that Fauche had left one day of July in the year 1795, in order to hunt for fortune. Thirty-four years ago! And here he was at the age of sixty-seven, poorer than in those remote days when he dwelt there with his wife and children. And he leant forward and threw himself into empty air; his body turned over in its fall, and was dashed to pieces upon the ground.*

* On Monday, September 7, 1829, Abram-Louis Fauche was buried here; born April 12, 1762, and died on September 7, about four o'clock in the afternoon, having thrown himself down from the highest floor of his hotel in the outer city. Son of the late Samuel Fauche of this city, and the late Marie-Madeleine, *née* Borel, his wife" (*Registre des Décès de Neuchâtel*).

INDEX

A

Almanach impérial, 124
Angoulême, Duc d', 125
Antoinette, Marie, 14, 19
Antraigues, d', Royalist agent in Venice, 39; arrested, 41; convinced that the "Secret Committe" is a hoax, 138
Army, of the *émigrés*, of the Rhine, of the Moselle, 22
Artois, Comte d', 127
Austerlitz, 104
Avaray, Comte d', 52, 73, 112

B

Barras, 42, 45, 48; Fauche hopes to corrupt, 48-9; 75; Fauche again hopes to corrupt, 76-7; 215, 253, 261-2
Basle, a neutral city; émigrés not allowed to sleep in, 29 n., 30
Bastille, was Vitel committed to the ? 14-15; Funck-Brentano's list of prisoners in, 15
Beauchamp, Alphonse de, 260-1
Beranger, 60
Beranger-Mersix, 60, 65
Berry, Duc de, 125
Berthier, 126
Bertrand, 149, 152
Besignan, Marquis de, fortifies his château, 70; subsequent adventures of, 70-1
Blacas, Comte de, 202, 218, 225
Blankenburg, Louis XVIII. at, 55
Blockade. *See* Smuggling
Blockade, the Continental, 174
Blotzheim, Pichegru, and Fauche-Bore at, 32-6; 45
Bodyguard, royal, at Mitau, 130
Bonaparte. *See* Napoleon.
Bonaparte family finds its way into the *Almanach*, 124-5
Botot, secretary to Barras, 48
Bougonière, Madame de la, 67
Bourmont, 59
British Government, munificence of, 37, 62, 74-5, 109
Brotier, Abbé, 57; arrested, 63
Brumaire, 115; the *coup* of, 127, 128
Brunswick, Duke of, offers harbourage to Louis XVIII., 54-5

C

Cadoudal, 93
Canning, receives Perlet, 190
Carency, Prince de, 60-2; turns informer, 65
Charles X., accession of, 253
Châtre, Comte de la, 190-1
Chouans, enter Paris in expectation of Royalist *coup*, 42-3; the Temple filled with, after Lozier's treachery, 93
Cicé, Mgr. Champion de, 19
Condé, Prince Louis-Joseph de, 20-1; his army, 21-2; financed by British Government, 25; 25-8; gives Fauche letter for Pichegru, 36; 73, 125
Correspondence, the English, 135; messengers of, 175; 182-5, 197
Courant, Antoine, 29
Court, the French, in exile, 53-5

D

Danican. *See* Thevenet
Description des Arts et Métiers, 12-13
Desmarest, lieutenant of Fouché, 96-8, 101; realises Fauche's treachery, 117; invents "Secret Committee" as a trap to catch Fauche, 118-19; daily reports to Napoleon, 123-4; wishes to entice Fauche to Paris, 135; his opinion of Perlet, 197; confides in Fauche, 222
Desmoulins, Camille, 71
Despomelles, 57, 63-4
Directoire, the, prepared to destroy Pichegru, 42; fall of, 77
Dubois, presents obscene books to friends, 116: 119, 122, 147, 148-9; 150; resigns, 198

Dumas, Alexandre, 253
Duverne de Praile, 57; arrested, 63; turns informer, 65

E

Edgeworth, Abbé, 133
Émigrés, exodus of, through Neuchâtel, 16; the army of the, 22; credulity of, 127
Encyclopédie Française, 12-13
Enghien, Duc d', on agencies, 127; 128
England, banned by Napoleon, 171; smuggling into, 171
" English Committee," organised and dissolved, 127
Esgrigny, Abbé d', 66-8
Executions, military, 158-60

F

Fauche, François, 100, 107-8, 112, 161-2
Fauche, Louis. *See* Fauche-Borel
Fauche, Samuel, 11, 12
Fauche-Borel, Augustine, 11
Fauche-Borel, Louis (11-49); marries and sets up in publishing business, 11-14; becomes a royalist, 16; his wife and family, 17-18; pursues Condé, 30-5; distributes wealth to *émigré* officers, 37-8; pursues Montgaillard, 40-1; prescribed in public placards, 45; hopes to corrupt Barras, 48-9; escapes to Neuchâtel, 50; grandiose ideas of, 49-51; welcomed by the Swavian agency, 75-6; arrested and imprisoned in Temple, 83; his life in prison (84-113); determines on escape to England, 89; ingenuity of his escape, 89-91; re-arrested and returned to Temple, probably a spy, 100; banished, a spy of Fouché's, 101; offered choice of place as exile, 103; as tuft hunter, 104; duplicity of, 105; finds employment in London, 109; the trap prepared for, 117-18; gives his time to the mythical Committee, 121-2; his credulity, 123; his greed, 124; selects Vitel for important mission, 138-9; anxiety as to Vitel's fate, 139-40; his belief in Perlet unshaken, 166-7; presses Perlet to come to London, 167-8; ordered to leave England, 186; secures cancellation of deportation order, 187; solicitors for Perlet's comfort, 193; waits for summons to Paris, 199; his exposure (202-31); returns to Paris with the Court, 203-4; arrives in Paris, 207; returns to Neuchâtel, 214; makes himself a nuisance, 215-6; is cold-shouldered, 218; trap to catch, 222; plays the great man at Vienna, 223; falsifies letter to Louis, 224-5; imprisoned and banished, 226-7; publishes a précis, 230; proceeds against slanderers, 231 (232-54); avenged upon Perlet, 241-2; upbraided in Court by the King's orders, 242-3; wins his case against Perlet, 245-6; becomes a suitor, 247-8; is repaid his loan to Louis XVIII., 249; receives a grant from Government, 250; talks and travels, 250-1; publishes the famous *Mémoires*, 261; commits suicide, 263-4
Fauche-Borel, Madame, 17, 103-4
Fauconnier, Louis-François, jailer of the Temple, 85-6, 89, 101, 153, 156
Fauriel, 88
Ferrand, 52
Force, La, prison of, 95, 123
Fouché, at head of police, 95-8; believed to be a Royalist, 119; believed to be an Imperialist, 120; hints that he is on the " Secret Committee," 121-2; British Cabinet counts upon, 139; 139-40; 168-9; described by Perlet, 169; daily reports to Napoleon, 178; resigns, 198; sets trap to catch Fauche, 222
Freemason, Fauche becomes a, 15
Frotté, 45, 59, 103
Fructidor, 136

G

George III., Royalist legation to, 109
Gosfield, French Court at, 166, 195
Guillot, a coiner, execution of, 15

H

Hartwell House, French Court at, 202
Haugwitz, Comte, 75-6
Hawkesburg, Lord, 190
Hoax, a majestic, 119. *See* " A Secret Committee "; a forerunner of, 124; 128-9; further mention of prohibited, 198
Howick, Lord, 138-40, 145
Hyde de Neuville, 127, 215

I

Iker, Madame, commits suicide, 17
Illkirck, Fauche meets Pichegru at, 36; 45

Ink, sympathetic, 108, 110, 122 n.
Invisible, l', 127
" Iron Box," the, 174

L

Leclerc, Abbé, 60, 102, 177-82, 249
Lemaître, 55; guillotined, 56
Lombard de Langres writes a defence of Fauche, 230
Louis XVI., 16, 17, 23, 26, 126, 130
Louis XVII., 52
Louis XVIII., 26, 30, 45, 48, 51; rehearses coronation at Verona, 52; joins Condé, 53; receives Condé's officers, 53-4; 56, 57, 73; his faith in the divine right of kings, 73-4; 83; anti-Bonapartist proclamation by, 105-6, 111, 112, 113; incredible credulity of, 119; possibility of luring to France, 119; 124, 125, 126, 127, 130, 132 *et seq.*, on the divine right of kings, 135; 145, 154; settles at Gosfield, 166; receives Perlet, 190-2; 194; at Hartwell House, 200-1; returns to France, 203; opinion of Fauche, 227; inspires Riffé's attack on Fauche, 242-4; death of, 253
Lozier, Bouvet de, turns informer after attempted suicide in prison, 93
Lyons, insurrection at, against the Terror, 72

M

Maisonfort, de la, steals Fauche's plan of corrupting Barras, 76-7
Mallet du Pan, 73
Marre, Abbé de la, 68-9
Masson, 80, 82
Masson, Madame, 82
Mayer, Madame, 61-2
Mehée de la Touche, first inventor of " Secret Committee," 124
Mengaud, Fouché's bulldog, 175
Mirabeau, 11, 15
Mitau, the French Court at, 109; 111, 112; description of, 129-30; difficulties of courtiers at, 130-1; the exiled Court at, 133-5
Moira, Lord, 120
Monaco, Princess of, 21
Monnier, David, harbours Fauche, 47-8; helps Fauche to escape to Switzerland, 50
Montgaillard, Comte de, 18-20; offers Condé a loan, 25; his idea of buying Pichegru, 25; suspected of being an informer, 39; in Venice, 39; blackmails Condé, 40; overtaken by Fauche, 40-1; employed by Napoleon, 209-10
Moreau, Fauche attempts to reconcile with Pichegru, 79, 88
More de Premilon, the sisters, 59
Moustier, Comte de, 109, 112

N

Napoleon Bonaparte, in Milan, 40; captures Vienna, 41; 88; Fauche reports his defeat at Austerlitz, 104; 107, 108, 113; his special police, 116: 117-8; renounced by Fauche, 122-3; 126, 128; on the return of the Bourbons, 134; signs Vitel's death-warrant, 162; abdicates, 202
Neuchâtel, 11
Neuchâtel, Almanach de, 12-13
Nodier, Charles, on Veyrat, 115, 259, 260
" Nymph," 181-3

O

Oberkamlach, Cenotaph at, 22
Oultrement, Comte d', 52

P

Paris, Royalist agents in, 55 *et seq.*; a city built for conspirators, 80
Pasques, 149, 153
Pasquier replaces Dubois, 198
Perlet, Charles-Frédéric, 80; sets up in Paris as printer and publisher, 81; is banished and shipwrecked on return, 81; his value recognised by François Fauche, 107-8; (114-40); becomes a police-spy, 114; his apprenticeship, 117; his correspondence with the Fauche brothers, 119-20; surprised by British munificence, 136-7; befriended by Veyrat, 115-6; makes the bogus Committee his special care, 118; writes daily to Veyrat, 145; consents to imprisonment during Vitel's mission, 141-2; profits by the Vitel affair, 155-6; fears visit to London, 167-9; ordered to visit London, 169; his tasks, 169-70; (171-201); sets out for England, 185; not expected to return, 185; dreads arriving in London, 185-6; forbidden to land, 188; describes Napoleon, 189; received by Louis XVIII., 191; complains of his reception, 193; " loses " a bogus pocket-book, 194-5; tries

to bleed British Government, 198; confesses, 199; accuses Veyrat of murdering Vitel, 213; assumes the defensive-offensive, 216; prepares to betray Fauche, 217; unmasked, 219; publishes an exposé, 230; indicted for calumny and fraud, 232-4; his defence, 234; disgraced, 239; fails to face the Court, 241; his real crime, 244-5; becomes a book-stitcher, 254; turns blackmailer, 255; death of, 258
Perlet, le Journal de, 81
Pichegru, 22; attempts at corrupting, 25-7; grants Fauche an interview, 33-6; demands letter from Condé, 35; relieved of command and summoned to Paris, 39; details of negotiations sent by Napoleon to Paris, 41-4; arrested, 45; exiled to Cayenne, 48; escapes from exile, 79; commits suicide in Temple, 94-5; his supporters tried, 95; 125
Picot de Closrivière, 94
Pilnitz, Declaration of, 16, 17
Pitou, Ange, '60; tries to buy off Royalist agents, 64; 249
Police, the, under Consulate and Empire, 95-100; torture applied by Secret Police, 93
Police, Secret, of the Consulate and Empire, 97-9
Police-spies, 114
Prussia, King of, 106
Prussian Minister, the, secures Fauche's liberation, 101
Puisaye, Comte de, tries to expose Perlet, 163-5; suspects Fauche and Perlet, 184; gets Fauche banished, 186-7

Q

Queen, the, 130, described by the Duchesse de Dino, 131

R

Ratel, Abbé, 69-70; did he offer to assassinate Bonaparte? 70; 177
Réal, lieutenant of Fouché, 96-8, 101
Regency, Council of, Perlet requested to organise, 113
Regent, Prince (George IV.), 203
Restoration, the, anticipated shower of honours by, 112
Revellière-Lepeaux, La, 67
Riffé, upbraids Fauche in Court, 242-3
Robespierre, 55, 71
Roussel de Préville, Madame de, 181-2
Roussel de Préville, Mademoiselle de, 181-2
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 34, 80, 82
"Royal Council," 127-8
Royale, Madame, 130, 135
Royalist Committee in Paris, 127, 131
Royalist Committee (the bogus). *See* "Secret Committee"
Royalists, disgruntled, 248-9

S

Safety, Committee of Public, 22
Scholl, 87, 90
Scholl, Madame, 87
"Secret Committee," Perlet's invention of a, 108, 109, 111; the original motive of, 118; inception and development of, 118-9; 135-6; to meet a delegate from England, 137; 189; preparing to destroy Napoleon, 190; did Perlet reveal to King? 192; Perlet's concocted report to, 196-7; Desmarest advises destruction of, 197-8; ignores Fauche's appeals, 201; Perlet finally refuses names of, 212
Smuggling, passengers and merchandise into England, 171-2; 173; during Continental Blockade, 174-5
Sourdat, Carlos, 59, 248
Swabian agency, the, 74-5

T

Talleyrand, 128
Temple, the prison of the, 19; Fauche imprisoned in the, 84 *et seq.*; attempted suicide in, 93; described by Fauche, 104
Tercy, François, 259-60
Terror, the, 18, 20, communications during, 173
Thevenet, a theoretical assassin, 71-2; fails in mission to Paris, 163-4; 238
Trémoille, Prince Louis de la, 59, 131
Tsar, the (Alexander I.), 129, 130; meets Louis XVIII. at Mitau, 132
Tuileries, Louis XVIII.'s return to, 134

V

Vauguyon, Marshal de, 53
Vendéens, enter Paris in expectation of Royalist *coup*, 42-3
Venice, the Royalist agents in, 39; captured by Bonaparte, 41
Veyrat, Inspector-General of the Prefecture of Police, 100; active in

the Geneva "Terror," 114; joins the police, 114-5; his relations with Napoleon, 116; his methods of training, 117: 119; described by Perlet as a Royalist, 120: 212-3; turns his coat, 213-4; dismissed and banned by Pasquier, 214; justifies self to Fauche, 220-1; unmasks Perlet in Court, 235-8
Villeurnoy, La, 58; arrested, 63
Virchaux, publishers, of Hamburg, 11
Vitel, Charles, 17, 87; chosen as British delegate to "Secret Committee," 138-40; his diary, 144; (141-70); persuaded of the Royalism of the French police, 152-5; his disillusion, 153; tried and sentenced, 156; his farewell letters, 156-8; his execution, 160; mystery of his death revealed, 219; his death an honour to be envied, 244
Vitel, Édouard, 17, 87; helps Fauche to escape from Temple, 89-92
Vitel, Jérémie, 12, 16; execution of, 17: 87

W

Waterloo, Battle of, 228
Weis, Charles, 259
Wickham, British *chargé d affaires* in Switzerland, supplies Fauche with money, 37; 74-5; Fauche bears dispatches to, 78; 109

Y

York, Duke of, 20

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
BILLING AND SONS, LIMITED,
GUILDFORD AND ESHER